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# SAMBALPUR.

BY  
L. S. S. O'MALLEY

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE



CALCUTTA:  
THE BENGAL SECRETARIAT BOOK DEPOT

1909.



## PREFACE.

I desire to acknowledge my obligations to the Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Sambalpur District (1906) by Mr. F. Dewar, I.C.S., which has been freely laid under contribution for the compilation of this volume. I beg also to express my thanks to Mr. A. N. Moberly, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur, for assistance in revising the drafts and supplying materials.

L. S. S. O'M.      \*



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# GAZETTEER

## OF THE

### SAMBALPUR DISTRICT.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

THE district of Sambalpur, the westernmost district of the Orissa Division, lies between  $20^{\circ} 44'$  and  $22^{\circ} 4'$  north latitude and between  $82^{\circ} 39'$  and  $84^{\circ} 23'$  east longitude. It contains an area of 3,824 square miles, and has a population of 638,992 persons according to the census of 1901. Formerly the district formed part of the Ohhattisgarh Division of the Central Provinces and had an area of 4,960 square miles with a population of 829,698 persons; but in October 1905 it was transferred to the Province of Bengal with the exception of the Phuljhar zamindāri and the Chandarpur-Padampur and Mālkharodā estates, with an aggregate area of 1,136 square miles, which were attached to the Raipur and Bilāspur districts of the Central Provinces.

GENERAL  
DESCRIP-  
TION.

For administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions, Sambalpur and Bargarh, with an area of 1,599 and 2,225 square miles respectively. They are called locally Uttartir and Dakshintir, i.e., the northern and southern tracts, with reference to their position north and south of the river Mahānadi. Another administrative division is that of *khalsa* and zamindāris, the former consisting of the area held by village headmen direct from Government and the latter of estates held by intermediary proprietors. The principal town, and administrative headquarters, is Sambalpur, situated on the Mahānadi in  $21^{\circ} 28' N.$  and  $83^{\circ} 58' E.$  The town is named after its tutelary goddess Samlāi, who was installed here when it was founded; and local tradition asserts that this name is derived from the fact that a cotton tree (*simul*) grew at the place where her image was set up.

stronghold of the insurgents in the rebellion of 1857. The main portion of the range is situated in the north-west of the Bargarh subdivision, where it separates Ambābhonā and Lakhanpur from the rest of the district. To the east of the Mahānadi it is continued in a long chain, which gradually decreases in height till it crosses into the Gāngpur State. To the south-west an outlying ridge projects for about 30 miles as far as the Singhorā pass, just beyond the border of the district, where the Sambalpur-Raipur road winds through it. This pass has been the scene of many an action between the predatory Gonds of Phuljhar and their more civilized assailants; and in 1857 the British troops had to fight their way through it on three successive occasions when marching to the relief of Sambalpur. On the south-eastern boundary of the subdivision, a few miles west of the Mahānadi river, there is another small range, which rises to a height of 1,287 feet in a peak 6 miles due west of Sambalpur.

The second group of hills is found in the Borāsāmbār zamindāri. Along the southern boundary a well-defined range separates it from the Pātnā State. The range, which is known as the Gandamardan range, averages 2,000 to 3,000 feet in height and reaches its highest point (3,234 feet) in the hill above Narsinghnāth, one of the most picturesque places in the district, with a stream falling in cascades down a steep hillside. From this range another branches off to the west of Narsinghnāth, running first north and then north-east to near Jagdalpur, where it is broken by the Ang river. It next runs eastwards to Tāl, and then to the north-east, forming the boundary between this district and Phuljhar, until it reaches Sārangarh at the point of trijunction. There are also several isolated hills of no great size in the zamindāri.

In the Sambalpur subdivision one of the principal ranges is that of Jhārgāhāti, which crosses the Rānchī road some 20 miles north of Sambalpur near the Rengālī railway station. Its highest point is 1,693 feet above the plain, and, like the Bārapahār range, it was one of the rebel strongholds in the rising of 1857. To the south are a succession of broken ranges running parallel with the Mahānadi, which rise to 1,563 feet at Mundher and to 2,331 feet at Bodhāpālī in the Loisingh zamindāri. There are a number of other small ranges and isolated hills scattered over the subdivision. Among these may be mentioned a range running south-east from Sunāri (a village 20 miles north-west of Sambalpur), the highest point of which is 1,549 feet above sea-level, and two hills close to one another, about 10 miles north-west of Sambalpur, called the Gotwaki and Gujā hills, with a height

of 1,158 and 1,264 feet respectively. Another high hill is that called Mandobanj (1,403 feet) in the range west of Rengāli, which in the subsequent account of the geology of the district is called the Katarbagā range from the village of that name to the north. A noticeable feature of the hill system is the absence of the flat-topped trap hills which are so common to the north and west.

The district forms part of the central basin of the Mahānadi, <sup>RIVER SYSTEM.</sup> which traverses it from north-west to south-east for a distance of nearly 90 miles. The other rivers are of minor importance, being mainly tributaries of the Mahānadi, such as the Ib, Jirā and Dantā. The following is a brief account of the principal rivers.

The Mahānadi enters the district in the extreme north-east <sup>Mahānadi.</sup> of the Bargarh subdivision and for some distance flows to the east forming the boundary between it and the Padampur zamindari. A few miles north of Murā it takes a south-easterly direction, separating the Sambalpur and Bargarh subdivisions, and 12 miles north of Sambalpur is joined by the Ib flowing from the north-east. After receiving this tributary, it describes a wide curve and turns due south, flowing into the Sonpur State, a few miles below Dhāmā.

Throughout its course in this district the Mahānadi is a river of the first magnitude, having a breadth of more than a mile in flood time, when it brings down a vast sheet of muddy water, overflowing its submerged banks and carrying with it boughs, trunks of trees, and occasionally the corpses of men and animals. For eight months in the year, however, it is nothing more than a narrow and shallow channel winding through a wide expanse of sand. In the upper portion of its course its bed is open and sandy, with banks usually low, bare and unattractive; but near Padampur it enters a series of rocks, which crop up all over its bed and split it into streamlets for several miles, thereby rendering it, if not unnavigable, at least very difficult of navigation. Further down its course is broken by rapids in several places, until it reaches Sambalpur. There its course is less obstructed, but it is occasionally interrupted by great rocks, which have been described as "the terror of boatmen—standing up in mid-stream and realising the exact notion of Scylla and Charybdis."\* At Kansumrā six miles below Sambalpur there are dangerous rapids, in which one or two boats are wrecked every year.

In spite of rocks and rapids, boats can ascend the river, and before the construction of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway it was the

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\* Sir C. Grant, *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, Nāgpur, 1870.

and east of the Mahānadi are schistose and granitic gneisses, while in and near the town of Sambalpur the rocks are chiefly granitic and porphyritic gneisses. A point about 3 miles east of Sambalpur seems to be the centre of a great synclinal basin, the rocks on all sides consisting of granitic and syenitic gneisses with schistose and shaly alterations. The Katarbagā range, north of Sambalpur and a little to the west of Rengāli, is formed chiefly of quartzites; and in the tract north-west of the town, between the coal fields and the Lower Vindhyan rocks, appear schistose and granitic beds, commonly of a fine porphyritic variety. But perhaps the most prominent feature, especially in the area to the west of the Ib, is a series of ridges formed of quartzite with an almost constant strike from north-west to south-east. The most remarkable of these ridges culminates in the Sunāri peak, which consists of protogine granites, covered by quartzites and sandy schists. South of the Mahānadi the rocks consist principally of granitic gneisses, except in the neighbourhood of Barpāli, where trap-dykes occur in some abundance. In the Borāsāmbār area the hills are principally formed of several varieties of garnetiferous gneisses. Generally speaking, the metamorphic rocks of the district owe their crystalline character very possibly to one and the same period of metamorphism, but it is improbable that they are the result of the metamorphism of one uniform series of rocks.

#### Minerals.

The district is fairly rich in minerals. Recent exploration has resulted in the discovery of one seam of good steam coal and of two seams of rather inferior quality in the Rāmpur coal-field within easy reach of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway. The former is known as the Ib bridge seam and contains coal more than seven feet in thickness. Two samples which have been analyzed contained 52 and 55 per cent. respectively of fixed carbon. Limestone is found in the lower Vindhyan rocks from Padampur southwards. It varies from a somewhat splintery white and pink limestone to a blackish grey rock, in which there are strings of galena. The Mahānadi near Padampur contains large masses of this rock almost as pure as marble in appearance. There are also several outcrops of crystalline limestone in the metamorphic rocks; the principal of these are at Kujermat to the north and towards Bolangir to the south. Iron ores are found in most parts of the hilly country on the borders of the district, especially in the Borāsāmbār, Kolābirā and Rāmpur zamindāris. Brown hæmatite appears in the rocks near Katarbagā, 16 miles north of Sambalpur, the ore being taken from the washed debris of the lode.

Galena occurs in the bed of the Mahānadi at Jhunān, 10 miles north-west of Sambalpur town. The history of its discovery is interesting. Professor V. Ball of the Geological Department, on visiting Sambalpur in 1874, was shown some specimens, which had been kept by the people for over 25 years. It appeared that galena was discovered before 1850 and was extracted, to a small extent, and used as a substitute for *surma* or antimony for anointing the eyes. But the Rājā, Nārāyan Singh, being afraid that the mineral might attract Europeans, stopped excavation and ordered the lode to be covered up and concealed. In 1874, it was rediscovered by a party of villagers working along a trench laid down by Professor Ball. Among the first specimens found was one (sent to the Geological Museum, Calcutta) weighing one maund six seers four chittacks, of which about half was galena. On assay the galena yielded 12 oz. and 5 cwt. of silver to a ton of lead, a small percentage but enough to yield a profit on the cost of extraction. The bed is of quartz permeated by nests and strings of galena. The lode, however, does not rise to the surface or outcrop of the gneiss above the river bed, but begins somewhat abruptly several feet below. To the north of Sambalpur, near Talpuchia on the Ib, rolled pebbles, consisting of a mixture of oxide and carbonate of lead, have also been found.\*

Gold probably occurs pretty generally throughout those portions of the district in which metamorphic rocks prevail. The washers, however, confine themselves chiefly to the beds of the Mahānadi and the Ib; though in the rains they are said to leave the larger rivers and wash in the small jungle streams. Gold-washers also work in the Ib below Tahud within the area occupied by the Talcher rocks; but whether gold is derived directly from the Talcher rocks or has been brought down by the river is not known. The methods employed by, and the earnings of, the washers do not differ materially from those in Singhbhūm district.\* Mica also exists, but the plates are too small to be of commercial value.

The district has long been famous as a diamond producing Diamonds. tract, and some of the oldest writers speak of the diamonds found in it as being of the purest quality found in India. As early as 1766 Clive sent an officer, Mr. Motte, to Sambalpur, to purchase diamonds, as he wished to use them as a convenient means of remitting money to England. This officer purchased a few diamonds, which at that time were found at the junction

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\* V. Ball, *On the Diamond, Gold and Lead Ores of the Sambalpur district.* Rec. Geo. Surv. Ind., Vol. X, pp. 186-192.



of the Ib and Mahānadi. Dr. Breton, a surgeon in the East India Company's service, gives details of the numbers and weights of the diamonds found in the Mahānadi between 1804 and 1818, from which we learn that one stone weighing 672 grains or 210·6 carats was seized by the Marāthā Commandant in 1809. Nothing is known of the subsequent history of this stone, but its weight would give it a high rank among the largest diamonds ever found. Other stones weighing 288 and 308 grains were received by the Rānī of Sambalpur, and in 1818 a diamond weighing 84 grains and valued at Rs. 5,000, was brought to the British Agent, who forwarded it to Government.

Professor Ball gives the following account of the way in which diamond mining was conducted under native rule:—"From personal enquiry from the oldest of the Jhorās, or washers at the village of Jhunān, and from various other sources, the following details have been obtained as to the manner in which the operations were carried on in the Rājā's time. In the centre of the Mahānadi, near Jhunān, there is an island called Ilirākud, which is about 4 miles long and for that distance separates the waters of the river into two channels. In each year, about the beginning of March or even later, when other work was slack and the level of the water was approaching its lowest, a large number of people—according to some of the present inhabitants as many as five thousand—assembled and raised an embankment across the mouth of the northern channel, its share of water being thus deflected into the southern. In the stagnant pools left in the former, sufficient water remained to enable the washers to wash the gravel accumulated between the rocks, in their rude wooden trays and cradles. Upon women seems to have fallen the chief burden of the actual washing, while the men collected the stuff. The implements employed and the method of washing were similar to those commonly adopted in gold-washing, save only that the finer gravel was not thrown away until it had been thoroughly searched for diamonds. Whatever gold was found became the property of the washer. Those who were so fortunate as to find a valuable stone were rewarded by being given a village. According to some accounts, the washers generally held their villages and lands rent-free; but it is scarcely likely that all who were engaged in the operations should have done so. The people apparently did not regard their (in a manner) enforced services as involving any great hardship; they would be glad to see the annual search re-established on the old terms."\*

\* V. Ball, *Manual of the Geology of India, Part III, Economic Geology*, Calcutta, 1881.

When Sambalpur was taken over by the British, the Government offered to lease out the right to mine diamonds, and in 1856 a notification appeared in the Gazette describing the prospects in somewhat glowing terms. For a short time a lease was held by an European at the very low rate of Rs. 200 per annum; but as it was given up voluntarily, it may be concluded that the lessee did not make it pay. The fact that the Government resumed possession of the rent-free villages, while the Rājā's operations had been carried on without any original outlay, materially altered the case, and rendered the employment of a considerable amount of capital then, as it would be now, an absolute necessity.

As regards the origin of the diamonds, Professor Ball writes as follows:—"The geological structure of the country leaves but little room for doubt as to the source from whence they are derived. Coincident with their occurrence is that of a group of rocks referable to the Lower Vindhyan or Karnul series, certain members of which series are now found, or are believed to have formerly existed, in the vicinity of all the known diamond-yielding localities in India, and in the case of actual rock-workings include the matrix of the gems. In several of the early accounts, the belief is either stated or implied that the diamonds are brought into the Mahānadi by its large tributary, the Ib. But we have the positive assurance of the natives that diamonds have not been found in that river, although gold is and has been regularly washed for. On the other hand, diamonds have certainly been found in the bed of the Mahānadi as far west as Chandarpur, and at other intermediate places, well within the area which is exclusively occupied by the quartzites, sandstone shales, and limestones of Vindhyan age. The fact that the place, Hirākud, where the diamonds were washed for, is on metamorphic rocks, may be readily explained by the physical features of the ground. The rocky nature of the bed there, and the double channel caused by the island, afforded unusual facilities for, in the first place, the retention of the diamonds brought down by the river, and, secondly, for the operations by which the bed could on one side be laid bare, and the gravel washed by the simple contrivances known to the natives. It is impossible to say at present which the actual bed or beds of rock may be whence the diamonds have been derived, as there is no record or appearance of the rock matrix ever having been worked; but from the general lithological resemblance of the sandstones and shales of the Bārapahār hills with the diamond-bearing beds, and their associates in other parts of India, it seems not improbable that they include the matrix. Above Padampur, the Mahānadi runs through rocks of this age, and any one who

may hereafter embark upon the undertaking of searching for diamonds in Sambalpur should confine his operations, in the first instance, to the streams and small rivers which rise in the Bārapahār hills and join the Mahānadi on the south."

Pebbles of beryl, topaz, carbuncle, amethyst, cornelian, and clear quartz also used to be collected in the Mahānadi; but there is no record of either sapphires or rubies ever having been found. It is probable that the matrix of these, or most of them, exists in the metamorphic rocks, and is therefore distinct from that of diamonds.\*

#### BOTANY.

Sambalpur is, on the whole, a well-wooded country, Government reserved forests extending over 396 square miles, while zamindāri forests have an area of 375 square miles. These forests are found mainly on the hills and in the broken country which forms so large a portion of the district. In the more level tracts the light sandy soil is admirably suited for the growth of fruit trees, and the abundance of mango groves and clumps of palm trees gives the village scenery a distinct charm. The forest vegetation of Sambalpur is included in the great *sāl* belt; and in the south-east, where the climate is somewhat moist, the forest has a tendency to become nearly evergreen.

The principal timber tree is *rengāl* or *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*), which is used for building houses and boats, for railway sleepers, country carts and agricultural implements. Next in importance as a timber tree is *piāsāl* or *bijā* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*), which is used for making furniture, while *sāhāj* or *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) yields the commonest of all the building timbers, its bark being also used for tanning. Among other economically useful timber trees may be mentioned *karla* or *garāri* (*Cleistanthus collinus*), *lendya* or *sonha* (*Lagerstræmia parviflora*) and *dhāora* (*Anogneissus latifolia*), which are all employed for building purposes, while the tree last named is invariably used for making axles of carts. *Bandhan* or *tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*), *mundi* or *keim* (*Stephegyne parvifolia*) and *haldu* or *halenda* (*Adina cordifolia*) also belong to this class, but are not found in any abundance. Teak (*Tectona grandis*) is confined to two places, viz., the Government forest of Lachhmīdungrī within 5 miles of Sambalpur and a small plantation near the rifle range at that town. The species yielding ornamental timber include *shisham* or rose-wood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), *gambhāri* or *kūmār* (*Gmelina arborea*), *bhirā* or satin-wood (*Chloroxylon Swietenia*), *kendu* or ebony (*Diospyros melanoxyton*) and *rohan* or Indian redwood

\* V. Ball, *Manual of the Geology of India, Part III, Economic Geology*, Calcutta, 1881.

(*Soymida febrifuga*). From the *harirā* or *harrā* (*Terminalia Chebula*) the myrobalans of commerce are obtained, and its allied species *baherā* (*Terminalia belerica*) yields an inferior timber and a fruit which is used medicinally. The wood of the *kusum* (*Schleichera trijuga*) is commonly used for making sugarcane presses and oil mills, while its fruit is eaten, and oil is extracted from its seed. The *simul* or cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*) is common in the forests and also in the open country, the cotton surrounding the seeds being used to stuff quilts and cushions.

Among trees conspicuous for their beautiful flowers may be mentioned the *sunāri* or *amaltās* (*Cassia fistula*) with long pendulous racemes of yellow flowers, which have given it the name of the Indian laburnum, and also the *ganiāri* (*Cochlospermum gossypium*), a tree with large yellow flowers growing on dry stony slopes; the wood of the latter tree is used by postal runners for torches during the night time, while its gum furnishes an article of food. Of other flowering trees the most common are the *kuthar* or *kachnār* (*Bauhinia variegata*) with large blossoms of four white petals and one pink or variegated petal, and the *palās* or *palsā* (*Butea frondosa*), remarkable for its brilliant scarlet-orange flowers appearing when the tree is quite leafless; the latter are useful for dyeing, while its fibrous roots are made into ropes. The *siris* (*Albizia Lebbek*), a handsome tree with greenish-yellow flowers, is found in the forest, but is rare. The principal flowering shrubs are the *kharkhasa* or *sihāru* (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*), with fragrant yellowish-white flowers used for garlands and also for dyes, and the *dhātuki* or *dhāuri* (*Woodfordia floribunda*) bearing red flowers, which are made into the vermilion dye so familiar during the Holi festival. Flowering herbaceous plants are few, and the most brilliant flowers are found on the trees.

Among small trees or shrubs growing in scrub-jungle may be mentioned the *chār* or *achār* (*Buchanania latifolia*), the fruit of which is an ingredient of sweetmeats and is also bartered for salt; the graceful *āonlā* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), the leaves of which are used for tanning; and *dhāman* (*Grewia vestita*), the wood of which is made into cart shafts. There are two species of *Zizyphus* very common in the forests, viz., *bair* (*Zizyphus Jujuba*), which is found on the sites of old deserted villages, and *ghānto* or *ghatol* (*Zizyphus Xylopyra*). There are also two species of *Gardenia*, viz., *kurdu* or *dekamali* (*Gardenia gummiifera*), the gum of which is used medicinally, while its fruit is eaten when ripe, and *damkurdu* (*Gardenia latifolia*), from the wood of which combs

are made. The fruit of the *patwāphal* or *mainphal* (*Randia dumetorum*) is used medicinally, and the roots of the *kure* or *kudu* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*) are an antidote for diarrhœa and dysentery. Three other trees common in scrub-jungle on the dry slopes of the hills are *salia* or *salai* (*Boswellia thurifera*), *girungila* or *kulu* (*Sterculia urens*) and *mai* or *moi* (*Odina Wodier*).

The principal creepers are *sialpatta* or *mahl* (*Bauhinia Vahlia*), the leaves of which are used for making country umbrellas and for plates, while the pods are fried, the seeds are eaten, and the fibrous bark is converted into string; and *budhla* (*Butea superba*), the leaves and flowers of which resemble those of the *palās* (*Butea frondosa*). *Dendrocalamus strictus* is the only bamboo found in the forests.

Of trees growing in the open country the most important is the *mahlā* or *mahuā* (*Bassia latifolia*) with its lofty spreading foliage. Its flowers are used as an article of food and also for the manufacture of country spirit. *Bambur* or *babul* (*Acacia arabica*) is a tree favouring black cotton soil and, except on the banks of tanks, is rare in the Sambalpur district, and so is the *gulara* or *reimja* (*Acacia leucophlea*). Of the *Ficus* family, *dumri* or *gular* (*Ficus glomerata*), *bar* or *banyan* (*Ficus indica*) and *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*) are abundant in the open country, and are also planted in villages from religious motives, for they are believed to be the resort of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. The most common tree planted in groves in the neighbourhood of villages is the mango. Other trees planted for the sake of their fruit are *tentuli* or tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *kailh* (*Feronia elephantum*), *bair* or wild plum (*Zizyphus Jujuba*), *panus* (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), *munaga* (*Moringa pterygosperma*), *jāmbu* or *jāmun* (*Eugenia Jambolana*), and *bahalphal* (*Cordia myxa*). *Limb* or *nim* (*Melia indica*) is planted freely, as it is supposed to be a disinfectant purifying the air; *karanj* (*Pongamia glabra*) is planted for the sake of its fruit and the oil extracted from its seeds, which is used medicinally for itch. The following trees are generally planted about the precincts of temples:—*bel* (*Aegle Marmelos*), *baula* or *molsuri* (*Mimusops Elengi*) and *asoka* (*Polyalthia longifolia*). The leaves of the first are sacred to Siva, the fragrant star-like flowers of the second are an object of worship, and the twigs and leaves of the third are used on festival occasions for festooning the shrines. Of the trees mentioned above, the *gular*, *banyan*, *pipal*, mango, *jāmun*, *karanj* and *asoka* are commonly grown in avenues, and other avenue trees often planted are *bakam* (*Mallingtonia hortensis*) and *siris* (*Albizia Lebbek*). The

palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is very common and is planted in almost every village, as its fruit when ripe is used as an article of food. The date palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is also met with, but not in all parts of the district. The kattang bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*) is often found planted in towns and villages.

There is a dearth of good grazing grasses, but the succulent *dūb* (*Cynodon dactylon*), which is sacred to Ganesh, grows all over the district on sandy soil where there is some moisture. Another good grass called *mūsākānī* or *musyāl* (*Isilema Wightii*) is generally confined to old fallows or the ridges which form the boundaries of fields; it prefers clayey soil and is rarely found in the forests. The commonest grass of all is the *sukla* or *kusal* (*Pollinia argentea*), which is found everywhere in the forests and elevated places; it is really the common fodder grass of the district, and is excellent while young. Another grass found all over the district in small quantities is *panasi* or *bhaber* (*Pollinia eriopoda*), which is used for rope-making. Among rarer grasses may be mentioned *hel* or *kaila* (*Andropogon annulatus*), *khas* (*Andropogon squamosus*), *tikhari* (*Andropogon Schœnanthus*), which yields the aromatic rūsa oil, and *kāns* (*Saccharum spontaneum*), which is used in religious ceremonies and is an enemy dreaded by the wheat cultivator. There are two weeds of the *Cassia* species, of which *Cassia tora* (known as *chakhandā*) is very common; it is eaten when young as a vegetable.\*

"Sambalpur," writes Mr. Dowar, "is reputedly a good big ZOOLOGY. game district, and in past years has been one of the happiest hunting grounds in the Central Provinces. But the cutting out of the forests and the spread of rice and cane cultivation into all the valleys and up all the streams have of late years curtailed the grazing grounds of wild animals and cut off their water-supplies. The available watering places are few and are easily watched by the poacher, who does much killing by night in the hot months. This abuse is very difficult to stop so long as the profitable trade in hides and horns is not restricted."

In spite, however, of this diminution in the number of wild Wild animals. animals, and especially of ruminants, few districts in Bengal have such a wealth and variety of animal life. Though their numbers have greatly decreased in recent years, tigers are still fairly numerous. They are found mostly in the forest-clad hills bordering the district, from which they move into the neighbouring States if disturbed by wood cutting, coming back again when

\* This account of the botany of Sambalpur has been prepared from a note by Mr. S. G. Paranjpe, formerly Divisional Forest Officer, Sambalpur.

falling begins there. Panthers are more common than tigers, though more rarely seen by the sportsman; they frequent open scrub-jungle throughout the district, and, like tiger, are very destructive to cattle. Leopards are common in the wooded tracts and are found in most of the small hills near villages. They are most daring in their depredations, often scaling the walls of a goat or sheep pen in the heart of a village and carrying off village dogs in the coolest manner. The *chi'āh* or hunting leopard (*Cynelurus jubatus*) is also met with occasionally, more especially in the more open country to the south and west. The red lynx (*Felis caracal*), though very rare, has been seen and identified on more than one occasion. It is found in the south-west of the district, and one is known to have been run down with dogs a mile to the east of Sambalpur. Among other species of the family *Felide* may be mentioned the large civet cat, the lesser civet cat, the tree cat, the common jungle cat, and the leopard cat; the cat last named is fairly common and has been seen at Lamdungri within 6 miles of Sambalpur.

Wolves are rare, but are found in the neighbourhood of Saraipāli and between Saraipāli and Borāsāmbār in the south-west of the district. Packs of wild dog infest the forests and are very destructive to game. They have been met with in the jungles near Sāsan Rengāli and Lakhanpur (Rāmpur) and are said to come down regularly from Hingīr. The striped hyæna and jackal are found all over the district, and the latter is described as infesting the Bargarh plain, where it does much damage to the finer and softer varieties of sugarcane. The Indian fox is fairly common in the more open parts to the east of Sambalpur, and a few have been seen near the town and towards Borāsāmbār. The Indian black bear or sloth bear (*Ursus labiatus*) is very common in the forests, where his surly temper makes him more dangerous to the wayfarer even than tiger. Maulings by bear are frequent, most of the victims being women going down the jungle paths with loads to market or gathering *mahuā* flowers in the early morning on the skirts of the forests. They also do a considerable amount of damage in the cane fields. Wild pig are even more mischievous; for they abound all over the district, except in the open plain, and damage both rice and cane, destroying in either case much more than they can eat. They are rarely fired at by the village *shikāris*, who confine their attention to deer; but sometimes, when very troublesome, they are caught in pits.

Wild elephants have disappeared from the district, though they occasionally make a foray into the cultivated land on the

borders of Rairākhola and Pātnā. The wild buffalo (*Bos bubalus*) is found, but is very rare, the only place in which it is met with being the valley of the Jonk river on the boundary between Sambalpur and Raipur; it is believed that only one small herd now survives. The *gaur* (*Bos gaurus*), the "bison" of sportsmen, is also rare, but is found on the Narsinghnāth plateau in the Borāsāmbār zamindāri; cases have been known of their coming as far inland as Hero Ghenupali near Sambalpur and directly south of that in Loisingh. Few representatives of the deer tribe are left. *Chital* or spotted deer (*Cervus axis*) are found in the more open forests and glades, more especially in Borāsāmbār and round Sambalpur itself, but are nowhere common; to the north of the Mahānadi they have been exterminated. Both barking deer (*Cervulus muntjac*) and mouse deer (*Tragululus meminna*) certainly occur, but are rare. The former is occasionally found in the Rājpur jungle and the latter in the forests to the south. It might be expected that the *sāmbār* (*Cervus unicolor*) would be common in the fine forests of this district, but it has been almost exterminated, and one may go for a whole year without seeing one of these noble stags except on the borders of Borāsāmbār and Bāmra. On the other hand, the *nīlgai* or blue bull (*Tragocamelus boselaphus*) and the four-horned antelope are common. The antelope proper (*Antelope cervicapra*), the "black buck" of sportsmen, is however extremely rare, being found only in a small tract of open country to the north and west of Borāsāmbār, and there only in small numbers. The *chinkāra* or ravine deer is said to be found in the forests.

Among other animals may be mentioned the long-tailed *langur* or grey ape, the red-faced monkey, hedgehog, porcupine, mungoose, musk shrew, hare, badger and scaly ant-eater, all of which are common. The tribe of rodents includes the jerboa rat, the bandicoot, the common striped squirrel, and also the comparatively rare brown flying squirrel (*Pteromys cral*), a large squirrel with loose folds of skin which can be spread out like a small parachute. The ordinary flying fox is common, and the other is found in the Mahānadi and its tributary streams.

The district also possesses a comparatively rich variety of Game birds. Pea fowl, red jungle-fowl and red spur-fowl are birds. numerous in the forests, and painted spur-fowl are found in small numbers to the east. Grey partridge are also found in small numbers, and the painted partridge in scrub-jungle towards the south and east. The large grey quail and bush quail are common, while the rain quail and large button quail are met with occasionally. Sand grouse are found towards the west beyond



Ramelā, and a few have been shot on the barer hills round Sambalpur itself. The Indian bustard has been identified. Green pigeon are plentiful, and plover are fairly common, but the blue rock pigeon is comparatively rare.

Of water-fowl there are many representatives. During the cold weather duck and teal are plentiful on the many tanks scattered throughout the district, and also on the Mahānadi and Ib, while snipe are equally plentiful on the marshy ground and irrigated rice fields below tanks. The principal varieties of immigrant duck are the pintail and gadwall, but the ruddy sheldrake or Brāhmanī duck is also very common. The comb, the spotted-bill, the pink-headed duck, and the shoveller are also met with occasionally. The common whistling teal and large whistling teal are frequently found, and also the blue-winged teal and cotton teal. The red-crested pochard is found in enormous numbers on all the larger stretches of water during the cold weather, besides the red-headed and white-eyed pochard. Flocks of demoiselle crane frequent the sandy stretches of the Mahānadi at this time, as well as curlew, godwit, and two or three varieties of sand pipers. Snipe are common in the winter, and can be had at most camping places, though the snipe grounds below the tanks are seldom more than a hundred acres in area, so that big bags cannot be made. They are mainly pintail and jack snipe, but the painted snipe is also found in small numbers.

## Fish.

Fish of many varieties, including mahseer, *tengrā* and *rohu*, are abundant in the Mahānadi, and are also caught in the Ib, Ang and Jirā.

## Reptiles.

Poisonous snakes are very common. The iguana is caught and eaten by the lowest classes.\*

## CLIMATE.

The climate of Sambalpur, on the whole, compares favourably with that of other districts in Bengal. In the interior the temperature is, ordinarily, not excessively high, but in the town of Sambalpur the heat is aggravated during the summer months by radiation from the sandy bed of the Mahānadi. This season of the year, *i.e.*, from the middle of April to the end of June is distinctly trying, though comparatively healthy. The monsoon usually breaks in the second fortnight of June or in the first half of July, and this period is not unpleasant except during breaks in the rains, when the weather at once becomes hot and oppressive. The cold season is pleasant, but it is of short duration, lasting practically only three months, and it is quite

\* This account of the Fauna of Sambalpur has been compiled mainly from notes contributed by Captain F. H. Watling, I.M.S., and Mr. J. J. Hobday, formerly Divisional Forest Officer, Sambalpur.

warm in February. The mean shade temperature for the year is 81°. Temperature falls to 49° in the winter months and is at its highest in May, when the thermometer rises to 112° and 113° in the shade.

The average rainfall is heavier and less capricious than that of the Central Provinces, but lighter and less steady than that of Bengal. The district appears to be situated on the edge of the monsoon current from the Bay of Bengal, which ensures a steady supply to the eastern portion, but falls off in strength westward of a line drawn from north to south through its centre. Consequently, as a rule, the rainfall in the Bargarh subdivision is not only less in amount, but also more variable than in the Sambalpur

Month.	Sambalpur.	Bargarh.	Average.
January ...	0.53	0.35	0.44
February ...	0.58	0.34	0.46
March ...	0.89	1.03	0.96
April ...	0.57	0.39	0.43
May ...	1.41	1.05	1.23
June ...	12.08	8.84	10.46
July ...	19.87	16.87	18.37
August ...	16.39	13.96	15.18
September ...	8.86	7.75	8.30
October ...	2.13	1.73	1.93
November ...	0.42	0.44	0.43
December ...	0.25	0.25	0.25
TOTAL ...	63.98	53.00	58.49

subdivision. It is also possible that the short rainfall of the former tract may be due in part to the fact that extensive areas have been denuded of forest growth. The marginal table gives the normal rainfall for each month in the year and shews the differences between the amount falling in the east and west of

the district; but it should be mentioned that Sambalpur is in the vicinity of hills, whereas Bargarh stands in an open plain at a distance of about 25 miles from the Bārapahār range. It will be seen also that the average annual rainfall for the whole district is 58.49 inches, but the amount varies largely from year to year, *e.g.*, it was 33.23 inches in 1865-66, 91.63 inches in 1896-97, and 44.33 inches in 1899-1900.

## CHAPTER II.

## HISTORY.

EARLY  
HISTOR-  
ICAL  
REFER-  
ENCES.

ACCORDING to some authorities, Sambalpur may perhaps be identified with Sambalaka, which Ptolemy mentions as a city in the country of the Mandalai, the Malli of Pliny, whose modern representatives are believed to be the Mundās. It may also have formed part of the territory of the Sabarai, whom General Cunningham takes to be the Suari of Pliny and would identify with the aboriginal Savarās, a race still numerous in the district. The latter theory seems the more probable, as Ptolemy describes the river Manada as rising in the country of the Sabarai and says that diamonds were found there in abundance. The Manada is most probably the same as the Mahānadī, and Sambalpur has long had the reputation of producing fine diamonds. Gibbon, indeed, states, without however giving reasons:—"As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Sumelpur in Bengal." Tavernier, again, mentions Soumelpour as a region rich in diamonds, containing the most ancient mines in India, and this place has been identified by most writers with Sambalpur.

Professor Ball, however, who has made a special study of the early references to diamond mines in India, has brought forward a mass of cumulative evidence to shew that Soumelpour is the same as Semah on the Koel (the Gouel of Tavernier) in the south of the Palāmau district, though he admits that, so far as he knows, there is no local tradition of diamonds having been found in that river. He is also inclined to identify the latter place with the Sambalaka of Ptolemy in the country of the Mandalai, i.e., the Mundās of Chotā Nāgpur; and in face of the evidence adduced by him, it is safer to regard the supposed antiquity of Sambalpur as purely speculative.\*

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\*J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy* (Calcutta 1885) pp. 71, 167, 9, 172-3; V. Ball, *A Geologist's Contribution to the History of Ancient India*, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIII, 1884; *Manual of the Geology of India, Part II, Economic Geology* (Calcutta, 1881), p. 30; V. Ball, *Tavernier's Travels in India* (1889), vol. II, pp. 81-86, 455-461.

According to tradition, Sambalpur was at an early period under the rule of the Mahārājās of Pātnā, who were the head of a cluster of States known as the Athara Garhjat (*i.e.*, the 18 forts) and dominated a large tract to the east of the Ratanpur kingdom. Their ancestor is said to have been a Rājput prince, who lived near Mainpuri and was expelled from his territories by the Muhammadans. He came with his family to Pātnā, where he was killed in battle; but his wife, who was pregnant, was sheltered by a Binjhāl, in whose hut she gave birth to a son. At that time Pātnā was divided amongst eight chiefs, each of whom took it in turn to reign for one day over the whole territory. The Rājput boy Ramai Deva, on growing up, killed the eight chiefs and made himself sole ruler of Pātnā. In succeeding reigns the family extended their influence over the surrounding territories, including the bulk of what is now the Sambalpur district, and the adjoining States, until all their chiefs became tributary. In the 15th century A. D. Narsingh Deva, the twelfth Rājā of Pātnā, ceded to his brother Balrām Deva all the jungle country bounded on the north by the river Mahānadi, on the east by the river Tel, on the south by the Ang, and on the west by the Jonk. Balrām Deva, who is regarded as the founder of the Sambalpur Rāj, first established himself at a place in the Bargarh *tahsil* which he called Nuāgarh, *i.e.*, the new fort. Next, as his power grew, he made a new capital at a larger place called Baragarh, or the big fort, the modern Bargarh. Thence he moved to Chaurpur, a village lying opposite to Sambalpur on the southern bank of the river Mahānadi. One day, the story goes, he crossed the river, while out hunting, and set his hounds at a hare. After a long chase, he found, to his surprise, that the dogs had been repulsed by the hare, and struck by this extraordinary courage in the most timid of animals, concluded that there must be some supernatural virtue in the land. He therefore determined to build a fort there, and in it installed Samlāi, the tutelary goddess of his family. The town thus established is the modern Sambalpur. A similar legend is still current regarding the foundation of Kharagpur, the city of the hare, in the Monghyr district.

The State founded by Balrām Deva soon became the most powerful of all the Garhjat States, and the power of the Sambalpur chiefs steadily increased, while that of Pātnā declined. Balrām Deva was succeeded by his eldest son Hirde Nārāyan Deva, and the latter by Balbhadra Sai, who settled the country now known as the Sonpur State on his second son Madan Gopāl, whose descendants still hold it. His eldest son, Madhukar Sai,

succeeded to the Sambalpur Rāj; and on his death it passed to Baliār Singh, whose name is said to be derived from the fact that he was a strong man and powerful ruler, whose suzerainty was acknowledged by the chiefs of the eighteen Garhjāts, viz., Bāmra, Gāngpur, Bonai, Pātūā, Sonpur, Khariār, Rairākhhol, Raigarh, Sārangarh, Bindra-Nuāgarh, Sakti, Borāsāmbār, Phuljhar, Baud, Athgarh, Pānchgarh, Mayūrbhanj and Keonjhar. The Rājās of Pātūā and Sonpur were of the same stock as the Rājā of Sambalpur; those of Gāngpur, Bāmra, Bonai, Mayūrbhanj, Keonjhar, Khariār and Baud were, it is said, connected with him by marriage; and the rest were Rājputs, Binjhāls and Gonds. Tradition still attests the prowess of Baliār Singh, tells how he overcame the Rājā of Baud, and relates a quaint story of a pilgrimage he made to Puri. There he was invited to dine in the house of his mother's sister, who was the queen dowager. The latter, who had heard of the courage and strength of Baliār Singh, challenged him to shew how he could defend himself if captured in his present unguarded state. Baliār Singh promptly replied:—"Do not imagine me unguarded or unarmed. Even now I can destroy thousands." So saying, he drew from inside his coat and turban some knives and swords which he had kept concealed there; it is said that he wore a *teyā*, or scimitar, so thin and slender, that it could be wrapped round his waist and worn as if it were a waist-band. The queen dowager, pleased with his ready address, induced her son, the king of Puri, to bestow on Baliār Singh the high title of *Hirākhand Chhatrapati Mahārāj*, i.e., the great lord of the country of diamonds.

Baliār Singh was succeeded by his son Ratan Singh, and the latter by Chhatra Sāi, who fortified the town of Sambalpur, erected a stronghold there, and excavated a tank, now known as Chhatrasāgar, near the Pātneswarī temple. There is a tradition that the country was invaded by the Muhammadan general Kālāpahār during his reign. The story is that when Kālāpahār invaded Orissa (A. D. 1568), the priests of Puri fled with the image of Jagannāth and buried it on the Mahānadi to the south of Sambalpur. Kālāpahār followed them to Sambalpur with his army, but could not force an entrance into the fort. While encamped outside it, his force was destroyed by the goddesses Samlāi and Pātneswarī; for the former assumed the form of a milkmaid and sold curds and milk to his soldiers, while the latter appeared as a *mālīni* or gardener and sold them fruit. Milk, curds and fruit spread desolation in the army, for cholera broke out; and Samlāi put Kālāpahār to flight, capturing among other things his drum, the sound of which had the reputation of making

the limbs of the Hindu gods and goddesses fall off their images. The drum, *ghantā* or big bell, and *ghūlghūla* or small bell taken by Samlāi are still to be seen in her temple; while the tombs of the Muhammadans who accompanied Kālāpahār are pointed out at Sankerbāndh, where his army encamped.\*

It should be added that the legend which says that the Muhammadan invasion took place during the reign of Chhatra Sāi cannot very well be entertained; for Mr. Motte, who visited Sambalpur in 1766, has left it on record that his son and successor Ajit Singh died in May that year. Local tradition says that the latter built the fort at Sambalpur as a protection against the raids of the Marāthās, and this can well be believed; for Motte gives an account of how the Marāthās attempted to storm the fort during his visit. He also makes it clear that the reign of Ajit Singh was one of internal feud and that this continued to be the order of the day when his son Ubhaya Singh succeeded.

With Ubhaya Singh we enter on more certain ground, for we are no longer dependent on legend and tradition, but have the narrative of Mr. Motte, which gives a graphic and detailed account of the country in 1766. This is of especial interest as being the first reliable account of Sambalpur, and is therefore published as an Appendix to this chapter. From other sources we learn that in the reign of Ubhaya Singh the forces of Sambalpur obtained a temporary success in the struggle with the spreading power of the Marāthās—a struggle which ended half a century later in the annexation of Sambalpur. Several guns of large calibre, it is said, were being taken from Cuttack up the Mahānadi in boats, in order that they might be transported to Nāgpur. Akbar Rāya, the minister of Ubhaya Singh, thinking this a good opportunity to strengthen the Sambalpur fort, caused the boatmen to scuttle the boats in deep water, so that the guns all sunk, and many Marāthā artillerymen were drowned. He then recovered eight of the guns and mounted them on the fort. The Rājā of Nāgpur sent a strong detachment to avenge the insult and recover the guns, but it was repulsed with slaughter. About the year 1797 an outrage committed by Jait (or Jayet) Singh, the successor of Ubhaya Singh, led to the conquest of his principality by the Marāthās. It appears that Nānā Sāhib Bhonslā, a relation of the Nāgpur Rājā, was going on a pilgrimage to Jagannāth with a large party of followers, when he was treacherously attacked by the levies of Sambalpur and Sārangarh, and also by those of Sonpur

THE  
MARA-  
THA  
CONQUEST.

\* Reports Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XVII, pp. 59-60. I am indebted to Bābu Satyabādī Pādhi and Bābu Nand Kishore Bohidār of Sambalpur for assistance in preparing this account of the legendary history of Sambalpur.

and Baud. He managed, however, to make his way to Cuttack, and returning with some Marāthā troops, succeeded after some severe fighting in making the Baud chief and Prithwī Singh, the chief of Sonpur, prisoners. He then encamped for the rainy season in the Sonpur country, and in the meantime Jait Singh strengthened the Sambalpur fort in expectation of being attacked. As soon as the rains were over, Nānā Sāhib appeared before Sambalpur, and regularly invested the town. For five months he remained before the walls without being able to effect an entrance, but by chance one of his men discovered that the moat near the Samlāi gate was fordable. Nānā Sāhib, on hearing this, assembled his forces, made a rush across the moat, and forced the gate. The fort was quickly taken; the Rājā, Jait Singh, and his son, Mahārāj Sai, were captured and sent as prisoners to Chāndā; and Bhūp Singh, a Marāthā leader, was left at Sambalpur to administer the country for the Marāthā Government.

Bhūp Singh assumed an independent position, and on being called to Nāgpur to account for his conduct, refused to comply with the summons. The Nāgpur Rājā then sent a large force to punish his contumacy, but Bhūp Singh surprised the Marāthās in an ambuscade at the Singhorā pass and drove them back in rout. This was only a temporary success. Bhūp Singh foolishly provoked the enmity of one Chamrā Gaontia by plundering his village, which was near the pass; and shortly afterwards, when a second body of Marāthās arrived from Nāgpur, Chamrā placed the Marāthā troops in ambush in the same pass. He then sent word to Bhūp Singh that a few troopers were pillaging the country, and when Bhūp Singh brought a force through the pass, the Marāthās fell upon it and almost annihilated it. Bhūp Singh fled to Sambalpur and thence retired with the Rānis of Jait Singh to Kolābirā, from which he made frequent appeals for the assistance of the British.

CESSION  
TO THE  
BRITISH.

After this, Sambalpur remained under the rule of the Marāthās until 1803, when Raghujī Bhonslā, Rājā of Nāgpur, after the decisive battles of Assaye and Argāum, ceded it to the British by the treaty of Deogāon, together with the adjoining States and the seaboard districts of Orissa. The town was quietly occupied by Captain Roughsedge, with a portion of the Rāmgarh local battalion, and Tātia Pharnavis, the Marāthā Governor, who had replaced Bhūp Singh, withdrew to Nāgpur. Sambalpur did not long remain under British suzerainty, for in 1805 it was gratuitously restored with the Pātnā State to Raghujī Bhonslā, "in consideration," the official account says, "of the great loss to which the Rājā had been subjected by the transfer of the

tribute and allegiance of the chiefs to the British Government." The real reason, however, for the cession may perhaps be found in the "feebly economical policy" of Sir George Barlow, the then Governor-General, who laid down the principle that "a certain extent of dominion, local power, and revenue, would be cheaply sacrificed for tranquillity and security within a contracted circle, and withdrew from every kind of relation with the Native States, to which we were not specifically pledged by treaty; and the minor principalities adjacent to or intermixed with the Marāthā possessions were left to their fate." \*

This withdrawal of the British protection, it is said, "caused MARATHA  
RULE. great distress to all classes of the inhabitants, and many attempts were made to induce the Rājā of Berār to exclude them from the treaty and to receive an equivalent for them in some other part of our territories. He, however, remained obstinate, and we, being unwilling to create jealousy or discontent by any further urging of the question, endeavoured to satisfy the people by promising that in the event of further circumstances bringing them again in our power, they should be permanently attached to the British dominions."† The Marāthās, however, did not obtain possession of the country for some time. The Rājā of Sambalpur offered so effectual an opposition to the cession, that in 1807 the Nāgpur State was obliged to solicit the assistance of the British Government, being unable itself to raise funds sufficient to equip an adequate force; and Mr. Elphinstone, the ambassador at Nāgpur, was consequently directed to remonstrate with the Rājā. Next year the Marāthās, having tried open force without success, obtained possession of Sambalpur by means of treachery. They entered into a solemn engagement, confirmed by oaths and religious ceremonies, by which the Rānī, on paying up arrears of tribute and undertaking for its future payment, was to be left in independent possession. Having thus lulled her suspicions, they suddenly attacked her troops and surprised the fortress. The Rānī escaped with difficulty and made her way to the territories of the British Government, which granted her a pension of Rs. 600 a month.‡

Sambalpur remained under the Marāthā rule for nine years, and their administration was in the last degree tyrannical. Raghuji, deprived of a large part of his territory, tried to make the loss good by incessant exactions, which earned him the sobriquet of the big *baniyā*. The Marāthā Governors followed

\* Sir Alfred Lyall, *The Rise of the British Dominion in India*, 1893.

† Bengal and Agra Gazetteer, 1841.

‡ W. Hamilton, *Description of Hindostan*, 1820.



suit, and an idea of their rapacity may be gathered from a quaint story told by Dr. Breton. A large diamond, weighing 672 grains, had been found in the Mahānadi, and this the finders brought to the Rānī. Unfortunately she was engaged in the funeral ceremonies of her mother-in-law, and before they were finished, the Marāthā troops arrived and expelled her from the country. A treacherous servant betrayed the secret to Chandrajī, the Marāthā commandant, who offered to give the finders a village and Rs. 1,000 if they gave it up. When they claimed the reward, he stormed at them, saying they had given him a stone instead of a diamond, and had them driven from his presence.\*

BRITISH  
SUZER-  
AINTY. •

Sambalpur again came under British suzerainty in 1817, when the fourth Marāthā war broke out, being finally ceded by a treaty concluded in 1826. When the British troops took the field, the inhabitants of Sambalpur, mindful of the promise given 12 years before, made frequent offers to Major Roughsedge, who was in command of the troops at Hazāribāgh, to assist him in driving the Marāthās out of the country. It is significant of the detestation in which the latter were held that, when the fort of Sambalpur surrendered, the garrison made it a distinct condition that the British sepoy should escort them beyond the borders of the State and protect them from the attacks of the infuriated peasants. Jait Singh had, meanwhile, been kept in confinement by the Marāthās with his son; but Major Roughsedge pleaded his cause so energetically, that Sir Richard Jenkins, the Resident at Nāgpur, obtained his release from Chāndā in 1817. He was restored to power in that year, but died in 1818, and the country was then administered by the British for a year. Mahārāj Sai, the son of Jait Singh, was made Rājā in 1820, though without the feudal superiority which the former Rājās had held over the other chiefships, advantage being taken of the circumstances in which Sambalpur was found to annul the dependency of the chiefs of the neighbouring States, to whom separate *sanads* were granted in 1821.

Mahārāj Sai died in 1827, and his widow, Rānī Mohan Kumārī, was allowed to succeed. Disturbances immediately broke out, and for some years there was constant internecine strife between the recognized rulers and pretenders to the chiefship. The most prominent of the latter was Surendra Sai, who claimed the chiefship as being descended from Madhukar Sai,

\* P. Breton, *Medico-Topography of the Ceded Provinces, South-West Frontier*, 1826.

the fourth Rājā of Sambalpur. He was readily supported by discontented Gond and Binjhāl zamīndārs, who found their privileges threatened and their lands encroached on by Hindu favourites of the Rānī. Villages were plundered to within a few miles of Sambalpur; and though Lieutenant Higgins, with a body of the Rāmgarh Battalion, which was stationed in the fort, drove off the insurgents, matters became so serious, that it became necessary to march a force from Hazāribāgh to put an end to the disturbances. This force was commanded by Captain Wilkinson, who, after hanging several of the rebels, came to the conclusion that there would be endless trouble so long as the Rānī remained in power. He accordingly deposed her in 1833 and set up Nārāyan Singh, a descendant of Bikram Singh, the eldest son of Rājā Baliār Singh, who had hitherto been considered not qualified to hold the Rāj owing to his mother being of inferior caste. Nārāyan Singh was at this time what is called at Sambalpur a *Bābu*, a title implying that the individual is of the Chauhān or chief's family, and was apparently a sort of personal attendant on the Rānī. He is described as having been perfectly astounded when it was proposed to make him Rājā, so much so that he prayed the Agent not to exalt him to so dangerous a position. However, Mohan Kumārī was sent off to Cuttack, the Government troops were withdrawn, and Nārāyan Singh was left to manage his newly acquired principality as well as he could.

Rebellion broke out at once, the Gonds rising under Balbhadrā Dāo, a Gond zamīndār of Lakhanpur; and it was a long time before the rebellion could be put down, as the insurgents always found shelter in the vast range of hills known as the Bārapahār. Balbhadrā Dāo was, however, at last slain at Debrigarh, the highest point of the hills and a noted rebel stronghold. An even more serious disturbance followed in 1839, chiefly due to Surendra Sāi, who looked upon Nārāyan Singh as an usurper, and, as already mentioned, claimed the throne on the ground of his descent from the fourth Rājā of Sambalpur. In 1840 he and his brother Udwant Sāi, with their uncle Balrām Singh, murdered in cold blood the son and father of Daryāo Singh, zamīndār of Rimpur. Upon this the three were arrested, tried, and sent off to the jail at Hazāribāgh as life-prisoners.

Nārāyan Singh died in 1849, and his widow, Rānī Mukhyāpan Devī, assumed the reins of government; but as he had died without male issue, the country was annexed by the British. This decision was taken in pursuance of Lord Dalhousie's well-known Doctrine of Lapsee; but the case of Sambalpur was different from that of other native States, for no adoption had ever

BRITISH  
ANNEXA-  
TION.

been proposed, and the last Rājā had during his lifetime expressly intimated his wish that the British Government should take possession of his principality and provide for his Rānīs.\* Accordingly Mr. Crawford, the Agent to the Governor-General, issued a proclamation that the State had lapsed to the British Government, and sent two native officials, Munshi Prasanna Lāl and Rai Rūp Singh, to take over the Rājā's papers, and to dispose of petty cases, etc. Mr. Crawford himself arrived at Sambalpur with a regiment of the Rāmgarh Battalion in December 1849, bringing with him Dr. J. Cadenhead. The latter officer was left in charge of the district as Principal Assistant with Rūp Singh as "Native Assistant," and Nārāyan Singh's widow, Rānī Mukhyapan Devī, was sent off to Cuttack, with a pension of Rs. 100 per mensem.

**RULE OF  
NATIVE  
CHIEFS.**

An idea of the internal state of the country before the British annexation may be gathered from the description given by Lieutenant Kittoe in his account of a *Journey through the Forests of Orissa* published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for May 1839. "Sumbulpur," he says, "lapsed to the British Government in 1827 by the death of the late Raja, but for some reason they sought for an heir-at-law and conferred it on an obscure and aged zamindar, and a perfect imbecile, who is now entirely in the hands of his crafty ministers. These people and the Brāhmans possess the best lands and obtain his sanction to all kinds of extortion; the farmers in their turn grind their ryots; the effects of such an unjust and oppressive system are everywhere apparent. It is said that the Raja realizes Rs. 7,00,000 per annum, but Rs. 4,00,000 is perhaps nearer the mark, including valuable diamonds, which are occasionally found. It is certain that, were the province under proper rule, much more could be made of it. Therefore, it is to be hoped that on the demise of the present Raja, who has no children, the Government will avail itself of the opportunity and resume it. At present it pays us an annual tribute of Rs. 8,000, Rs. 500 of which has for some years past been remitted in consideration of the dawk road being kept in repair, and the jungle in its immediate vicinity cleared.

"The town of Sumbulpur extends for upwards of 2 miles along the proper left bank of the river; of this space the fort occupies about three-quarters of a mile. It is fast falling to ruin; the Raja no longer resides in the old *Noor* (citadel, palace), which

\* *The Administration of Lord Dalhousie*, Calcutta Review, Vol. XXII (p. 35), 1854; *Sir Charles Jackson and Lord Dalhousie*, Calcutta Review, Vol. XLII, (p. 180), 1866.

is occupied by some of his officers; there is a miserable garrison of a few ragamuffins dressed as sepahis, and some 20 or 30 sowars, whose steeds are like Pharaoh's lean kine. The walls are in a very dilapidated state, having suffered much from the effects of the extraordinary flood in 1836. The bamboo thicket, which was cut down during the time the territory was in our possession, used to act as a breakwater, and protected the walls, which are very ill-constructed of unhewn stones. The ditch and swamp which defended the other three faces are in a great measure filled up and overgrown with weeds, and must render that quarter of the town very unhealthy. There is no appearance of any great trade being carried on, nor is there so much as the sight of such a large and populous place would lead you to suppose. Merchants concentrate here from Cuttack, Budruc, Nagpur, Bhopal, Chutteesgurrh, Sirgoojah, and barter their goods. Those of the lower provinces bringing salt, cocoanuts, cotton, cloths, spices, brass utensils, etc., exchange the same with those of the central for wheat, gram, lac, and cotton. Gold in small lumps is also taken in payment, and occasionally diamonds. The only produce of the province exported consists of oil seeds, cotton and rice, which are taken by bullocks, and (during the rains) sent by water to the Mogulbundi of Orissa."

Lieutenant Kitter adds an instructive instance of the methods of justice, saying—"I was somewhat surprised one morning while taking my ride to see three human heads stuck on a pole at the junction of two roads near the town; they were placed there in January 1838, their owners having forfeited them for treason, though not without a protracted and severe struggle." As he visited Sambalpur in May 1838, these heads had been exposed for 4 months.

The general nature of the rule of the native chiefs of Sambal-  
 pur has been forcibly illustrated in the Settlement Report by  
 Mr. Dewar. "The royal household received supplies of neces-  
 saries from its rich domain lands in such villages as Talab lying  
 near the palace, but while the Rājā remained in residence at his  
 headquarters, the headmen of villages, both far and near, sent in  
 requisitions of produce in addition to their customary money  
 payments. When he toured through his State, further supplies  
 were exacted, and all officers of Government lived free of charge,  
 and took toll not only from the fields and gardens but also from  
 the looms and nets. At times villagers were liable to render  
 unpaid labour on the roads and public buildings. These, the  
 usual incidents of feudal rule, represented an amount of taxation  
 large out of proportion with the fixed annual payments of cash.

FEUDAL  
 SYSTEM.

They were further added to on all exceptional or recurring occasions of expense by the levy of *nazarānas* on the headmen of villages. Their amounts were determinable only by the State, and they were liable to take the form of heavy benevolences. The zamīndārs, besides their nominal tributes, and besides the cost of presents paid and produce consumed during a royal progress in time of peace, were in war time liable to be called out with men, arms and supplies.

"The total revenue, probably not less than five times the fixed annual collections, can never under this system have been a light one, even in prosperous and peaceful years. How heavily it pressed on the villages during the first half of the nineteenth century can still be recollected by old men. Progress in cultivation was then hopelessly handicapped by the internal disorders that prevailed. These were not of the dignity of regular warfare, which, disastrous for a time, does not continuously harry the cultivator. To the leaders they were dynastic struggles, but to their followers and to the people at large they were episodes in a long inter-racial feud carried out bitterly in every village by means of raids, arson, torture and murder. The condition of the cultivator was not unlike that of French and English settlers in North America during the eighteenth century, when these had to constantly guard their homes and fields against aborigines led and armed by French and English captains. It is not surprising that even in the open parts of the country cultivation was limited to the immediate vicinity of fenced villages.

"It was in these circumstances that the district came under British rule."

EARLY  
BRITISH  
ADMINIS-  
TRATION.

The first acts of the new government were apparently neither judicious nor conciliatory. The revenue was at once raised by one-fourth indiscriminately, without reference to the capabilities of the villages; and the whole of the free-hold grants, religious and other, were resumed. Those who held villages entirely rent-free were assessed at half rates, without any reference to the period for which the grant had been held, or to the terms of the tenure. Assignments in money or grain from the revenues of villages were resumed, as well as assignments of land in villages. Great dissatisfaction was consequently created at the outset, and so seriously did the Brāhmins, who form a numerous and powerful community, look upon it, that they went in a body to Rānchi to appeal, without however obtaining any redress. In 1854 a second settlement was made on equally indiscriminate principles, the assessments of all villages being again raised by one-fourth. The result was an enormous rise in the

revenue obtained by Government. "The amount", says a writer in 1854, "paid by this State as tribute previous to 1849 was only Rs. 8,800. The amount now taken in the shape of direct revenue is Rs. 74,000, of which only Rs. 25,000 are expended in the cost of collection and the payment of establishments, including an European officer." In these circumstances, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that, when Surendra Sai headed a revolt during the Mutiny of 1857, he was joined by a number of chiefs, who feared further losses under British settlements. The chief of Kolābirā or Jaipur was one of the most powerful of these zamindārs, and on his taking up the rebel cause, many of the others followed from the force of example, or were compelled to join by the more influential. A few, however, held aloof, among whom may be mentioned Gobind Singh of Jharsagurā, who had previously revolted against the Rānī Mohan Kumāri and looked upon himself as the rightful heir to the State.

When the Mutiny of 1857\* broke out, the troops stationed at Sambalpur consisted of a detachment (150 foot and 12 horse) of the Rāmgarh Battalion, on the loyalty of which little reliance was placed, as it was believed to depend on the fidelity of the troops at Dinapore. These apprehensions were justified in the case of the detachment at Hazaribāgh, which, on hearing of the rising at Dinapore, mutinied, plundered the treasury, broke open the jail, and released the prisoners, among whom were Surendra Sai, the claimant of the Sambalpur Rāj, and his brother Udwant Sai. All remained quiet, however, at Sambalpur, and the detachment remained perfectly staunch—as indeed it did through the whole course of the rebellion. Before the end of August rumours of insurrectionary movements had begun to spread, though no actual outbreak occurred for some time; and early in September two companies of Madras troops were ordered up from Cuttack to Sambalpur by Mr. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Orissa.

This judicious movement was probably the means of saving Sambalpur, for Surendra Sai and Udwant Sai soon after their release entered the district, and a number of followers quickly collected round them. In the middle of September they entered the town of Sambalpur with a force of 1,400 or 1,600 men, and established themselves within the precincts of the old fort. Thence Surendra Sai sent to ask Captain Leigh, the Senior

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\* This account of the Mutiny has been prepared mainly from the "Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the Mutinies as they affected the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal."

Assistant Commissioner in charge, to grant him an interview, stipulating for a safe conduct. When Captain Leigh received him on these terms, Surendra Sāi assured him that he had no intention of aspiring to the Rāj, and that his only object was to induce Government to cancel the remaining portion of his and his brother's imprisonment. Captain Leigh promised to represent the matter to Government, and in the meantime Surendra Sāi agreed to disperse his followers and remain at Sambalpur, whilst Udwant Sāi was permitted to reside in the village of Khindā, a little distance off. The promise was soon broken, for on the 31st October Surendra Sāi made his escape from Sambalpur and joined his brother at Khindā, where 1,400 men had assembled.

A further reinforcement of two companies of the 40th Madras Native Infantry had been despatched under Captain Knocker from Cuttack on the 10th October, and with them were sent 50 men of the Orissa Paik Companies, who were to undertake the station duties and so release the regular troops for more active service. Shortly afterwards, Lieutenant Hadow of the Madras Artillery having arrived at Cuttack with some light mountain guns, the Commissioner induced Major Bates to send him to Sambalpur with the guns and another company. This officer hurried up by forced marches, and was in time to take part in an expedition which Captain Knocker made against Khindā and Kolābirā. In the latter place, which he reached on the 5th November, he destroyed the house of the *gaontia*; but he failed to capture Surendra Sāi and his brother at Khindā, though he found their houses loopholed and prepared for defence. In only one place (Jhārghāti) did he find any large gathering of armed men, and their numbers were concealed by the jungle.

Matters had now assumed a serious aspect. Many of the principal zamindārs were collecting their *paiks* for the purpose of resisting the Government, and the whole country in the neighbourhood of Sambalpur was temporarily in the hands of the insurgents, who were posted in strength at a distance of not more than 3 or 4 miles from the station, and nightly fired on our pickets. Dr. Moore of the Madras Army, who had been ordered to proceed with Mr. Hanson to afford medical aid to the troops at Sambalpur, was murdered while on the march, his companion escaping and wandering about in the jungle without food until rescued by a party of Sebundis sent out by Captain Leigh. Captain Leigh himself marched out with a considerable body of the Madras corps to support the Sebundis, but was attacked by the rebels under cover of dense jungle, and lost several of his men without being able to retaliate.

By the beginning of December the *ḍāk* road to Bombay was obstructed; two of the *ḍāk* stations had been burnt down, while large bodies were collecting in various directions and committing excesses of all sorts. Mr. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Orissa, now despatched to Sambalpur the remainder of the 40th Madras Native Infantry, under the command of Major Bates, and with him the guns and artillerymen stationed at Cuttack. Meanwhile the Lieutenant-Governor authorized the formation of two companies of Sebundis for service in the district under Captain Bird of the 40th Madras Native Infantry and made a strong representation to the Government of India, in consequence of which orders were sent to the Government of Madras to take immediate measures for strengthening Sambalpur. It was also decided to transfer Sambalpur temporarily to the Orissa Division, owing to the difficulty of access from the north and the heavy amount of work which pressed on the Commissioner of Chotā Nāgpur. Mr. Cockburn, who had been practically in charge of the district for some time before, assumed official charge on the 19th December, and proceeded at once to Sambalpur, accompanied by a wing of the 5th Madras Native Infantry under Major Wyndham, and by a detachment of artillery under Captain Ellywn of the Madras Artillery, arriving there on the 20th January.

In the meantime, Captain Wood had arrived at Sambalpur from Nāgpur, with a squadron of the Nāgpur Irregular Horse. On the 30th December he marched out with 73 of his own cavalry 150 of the 40th Madras Native Infantry, and 50 of the Rāngarh Battalion; and having surprised the enemy in a grove of trees, charged down on them with his cavalry, while the infantry came up in time to complete the rout. Captain Wood, who killed three of the enemy with his own hand alone, was wounded by an arrow. Surendra Sāi again managed to effect his escape, but his brother, Chhabilo *alias* Chhailo Sāi was killed. Early in January Major Bates arrived at Sambalpur and assumed command of all the troops in the district. He at once proceeded to force the Jhārghāti pass, which was held by Udwant Sāi, destroyed the breastwork which had been thrown up, and seized a quantity of arms and ammunition. He next destroyed the village of Kolābirā, which had been a nest of rebels, and shortly afterwards the *gaontia* and thirteen of the most influential men gave themselves up. The estate was confiscated, and the *gaontia* convicted of treason and hanged. A less successful sortie was made by Captain Leigh, who marched out with a small force but was unable to dislodge the rebels, who, to the number of about 1,500, were strongly posted on a hill, protected by dense jungle and stone barricades.



Shortly afterwards the Singhorā pass on the road to Nāgpur was forced by Captain Shakespeare, who, with a small force of Nāgpur cavalry, successfully attacked the insurgents. Captain Wood and Captain Woodbridge were sent out with detachments to occupy this position, but on the 12th February Captain Woodbridge was shot while marching on a post held by the rebels at Pahārsirgirā. On this, all the rank and file were seized with panic and fled, with the exception of two sepoy of the Rāmgarh Battalion, both of whom were wounded in an attempt to recover Captain Woodbridge's body. Two days later Ensign Warlow attacked the position, and driving the enemy off, recovered Captain Woodbridge's body. He found them very strongly posted in a defile between two hills covered with jungle. Across the entrance of the defile they had erected a wall seven feet high and thirty feet long. Half way up the hill on the left was another stonework, which commanded the one in front, while on the crest of the pass was a third barricade. For some considerable distance in front they had cleared away the jungle, so that the troops in advancing would be exposed to their full fire and have no cover. Ensign Warlow, however, threw out two flanking parties to his right and left, while a third was to advance up the gorge and deliver a frontal attack as soon as the other two parties should be engaged. The enemy, seeing their position turned, fled without offering any resistance.

Vigorous measures were also taken by detachments sent out to various parts of the district ; but they were hampered by the nature of the country, its dense jungles and almost inaccessible hills, which afforded cover and a ready retreat for the insurgents. A successful attack was, however, made by Captain Nicholls, of the 5th Native Infantry, on a position in the Bārapuhār hills supposed to be inaccessible to regular troops. The rebels were driven from their fastness, and a store of provisions was taken.

Towards the end of February 1858 tranquillity began to be restored. The rebels were being hunted down in all directions, and among those captured were some of the zamindārs who had been principally concerned in closing the roads to Cuttack and Calcutta. Three central posts for the regular troops, and eleven subordinate outposts for men of the Rāmgarh Battalion and the recently raised Sebundis, were established by Mr. Cockburn. He then returned to Cuttack, after making arrangements for the security of the district, confiscating the estates of insurgent zamindārs, and warning the friendly zamindārs against harbouring rebels. His presence was no longer required at Sambalpur, of Colonel Foster, who had been invested with the chief civil and

military authority in the district, arrived at the end of March, and was soon able to report that he could dispense with the services of all but his own regiment and the Sebundis. For further assistance he relied upon the contingents of the local Rājās, who were now, he said, willing and anxious to support his authority and afford aid in the restoration of peace and order.

Surendra Sāi, the ringleader of the rebels, still remained at large, and for four years troops were employed in every direction, trying to hunt him down and disperse his band, but without success. The most daring atrocities were committed by him, and he terrorized the country, any villager who dared to give or offer assistance to Government, being murdered with his family and his village fired and plundered. The royal proclamation of amnesty failed to win his submission, but at last some of the chiefs were detached from Surendra Sāi by the conciliatory policy adopted by Major Impey, who was placed in charge of Sambalpur in 1861 in subordination to the Commissioner of Orissa. He offered a free pardon and restitution of confiscated property to all rebels with the exception of Surendra Sāi, his son Mitra Bhānu Sāi, and his brother Udwant Sāi; and this offer induced many of the rebel chiefs who had been out since 1857 to surrender. Some of the most trusted adherents of Surendra Sāi, such as Hāthi Singh and his brother Kunjal Singh of Ghes, Kamal Singh Dāo and Khageswar Dāo (descendants of Balbhadra Dāo, the former rebel zamīndār of Lakhanpur) still obstinately refused to submit unless he was made Rājā of Sambalpur. When, however, Surendra Sāi saw many of the chiefs being reinstated, and found also that fresh troops were being sent to hunt him down, he resolved to listen to the overtures of the Deputy Commissioner. He at first attempted to stipulate that, if he did give himself up, he should be made Rājā; but at last, seeing that the authorities intended to pardon him if he came in, yielded himself up in May 1862. Strange to say, his captains, Kunjal Singh, Kamal Singh, and one or two others, refused to surrender even then. One of the last excuses made by Surendra Sāi was that Kamal Singh's band would not let him surrender unless he paid them a certain sum of money. This statement was fully believed by Major Impey, and he actually sent Rs. 500 to Surendra Sāi to distribute amongst Kamal Singh's followers, who were then in open rebellion.

For some time after the surrender of Surendra Sāi the country remained quiet. The rebel family had handsome stipends and several villages settled on them, and those who had been instrumental in procuring their submission were also liberally rewarded,

On this ground alone, one Loknāth Pandā, a Brāhman, who had two or three villages only, and who was very nearly hanged in 1857 for being one of the first to join Surendra Sāi in the rebellion, was constituted a chief, and 19 *khālsa* villages were made over to him, assessed at half rates for a period of 40 years. Mrityunjaya Pānigrāhi, another shrewd Brāhman, was also rewarded on similar grounds. In short, the authorities seemed to think that nothing was too much to give to the men who were considered to have achieved the pacification of the country, which had been a prey to rebellion and bloodshed without intermission for five years.

Early in 1863, however, fresh political upheavings commenced to be felt. Sambalpur had recently been incorporated with the Central Provinces, and the first visit of the Chief Commissioner, Mr. (afterwards Sir R.) Temple, was made an opportunity for reviving the old demand for the restoration of native rule. A petition was got up purporting to be from the landholders, Brāhmins, and influential people of Sambalpur, setting forth that they had been much harassed by the introduction of stamps, taxes, etc.; that there were still rebel zamīndārs in the hills, whose depredations they dreaded; but that if Surendra Sāi was made Rājā, all would be well, and the Government, in place of losing by the country, might demand a heavy tribute. Nothing was obtained by the petition, and it appears highly probable that it was engineered by Surendra Sāi and his advisers, the names of many landholders and influential inhabitants having been affixed to it without their knowledge or consent.

Shortly after the Chief Commissioner's departure, affairs began to get more serious. Kamal Singh and his gang again appeared on the scene, and began committing savage outrages in the *khālsa* villages. No less than 15 or 16 dacoities took place in six weeks, and a threatening letter was sent to the Deputy Commissioner warning him that the country would know no peace until Surendra Sāi's rights were recognized. It became evident that Surendra Sāi was still bound up with Kamal Singh and other rebel leaders. By degrees some dangerous plots and intrigues were discovered distinctly proving that the surrender of Surendra Sāi in 1862 was merely a blind, and that he had never for a moment intended to abandon the object of his life, viz., the recovery of the Sambalpur Rāj.

Major Impey died at Sambalpur in December 1863, but not before he had fully recognized the critical position of affairs and the necessity for arresting Surendra Sāi and his immediate relations and adherents. Circumstances, however, prevented their arrest until the 23rd January 1864, when it was successfully

effected by the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a few European officers stationed at the station. It was not legally proved that Surendra Sāi was preparing to wage war against the Government, but the Chief Commissioner and the Supreme Government recognized the necessity for keeping him, with certain of his relations and adherents, in confinement as dangerous political offenders. Dacoity then ceased, and profound peace succeeded the dangerous and critical period preceding his capture.

It is reported that, of those arrested, Lokhnāth Pandā of Rāmpelā and Mrityunjaya Pānigrāhi of Ardā died in jail, while Padnāth Guru was acquitted on appeal and returned to Sambalpur. After remaining for some time in prison, Surendra Sāi and his brother Udwant Sāi were released on condition that they remained at Raipur, where Udwant Sāi died and Surendra Sāi became blind. Mitra Bhānu Sāi, the son of Surendra Sāi, was released on the surety of his father-in-law, the Rājā of Bonai, and in 1907 the Government of India passed orders permitting him to return to Khindā.

Few districts have been affected by so many administrative changes as Sambalpur. After the cession by the Marāthās in 1817, though the direct rule rested with the Rājā, a general power of control was reserved for the British authorities, and soon after the accession of the last Rājā (1833) the State was placed under the Agent of the Governor-General for the South-West Frontier. This Agency, it may be explained, was called into existence by Regulation XIII of 1833 after the suppression of the Kol rebellion of 1831-32, and at first comprised the greater part of what is now the Chotā Nāgpur Division, but subsequently Sambalpur, with other Tributary States, was added to it. In 1849 Sambalpur came under the direct rule of the British, and was administered by an officer styled the Principal Assistant of the Agent for the South-West Frontier, the latter having his headquarters at Rānchī. This arrangement continued till 1860, with a change in the titles of officers; for in 1854 the designation of the Agent of the South-West Frontier was changed to Commissioner of Chotā Nāgpur, and that of the Principal Assistant to Senior Assistant Commissioner. In 1860 Sambalpur was transferred to the Orissa Division of Bengal, and by a notification of the 30th April 1862 it was made over to the newly constituted Central Provinces. In October 1905 the bulk of the district was retransferred to the Province of Bengal.

ADMINIS-  
TRATIVE  
CHANGES.

For some years past the Central Provinces had experienced such difficulties with the administration, owing to the ethnical and linguistic differences between it and other districts, that the

Chief Commissioner in 1901 had asked to be relieved of the district altogether. Although the Government of India were then unable to comply with his request, they were obliged to rescind a previous decision of 1895, which had proved unworkable in practice, and to restore Oriyā as the court language of Sambalpur. The transfer of Sambalpur was again urged upon the Government of India in 1904 by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser, K.C.S.I. In the letter expressing his views it was stated:—"The greatest administrative inconvenience has been experienced, inasmuch as there is no other part of the Central Provinces where Oriyā is spoken. It is necessary therefore for the officers of Government who are sent to administer the Sambalpur district to acquire the Oriyā language for their service in that district only. Native officers have to acquire the language as well as Europeans; they are very much averse to coming down to Sambalpur for a short term of service when that requires the acquisition of a new language; and Sambalpur has become mainly on that account what may be called a penal district in the Central Provinces. Again the subordinate staff has to be manned by persons talking Oriyā; that means that it is practically impossible to transfer officials with any freedom from Sambalpur to any other part of the Province, or from any other district to Sambalpur. The natural result is that the administration of the Sambalpur district, in respect at least of its subordinate officers, is both more inefficient and more corrupt than that of any other district in the Province. It was this great administrative difficulty which led to the abolition of Oriyā as the court language in Sambalpur, and the substitution of Hindī, by one of the Chief Commissioners. Experience proved almost immediately that this was a measure that could not be supported. The people in the interior know Oriyā, and do not know Hindī. They stand by their mother tongue; and they felt the pressure which was brought to bear upon them to adopt Hindī as a great grievance and oppression. The revenue, criminal and even civil administration suffered mainly from the fact that it was conducted in a language practically unknown to the people. Sir Andrew Fraser, therefore, when he was Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, obtained the sanction of the Government of India to restore the Oriyā language in Sambalpur, and proposed as the best means of meeting the administrative evil, of the gravity of which he was thoroughly sensible, to transfer the Sambalpur district to the Orissa Division. He holds the same views still."\*

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\* Papers relating to the Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam (Simla, 1904).

This recommendation was accepted by the Government of India, and accordingly, when in 1905 a redistribution of territory was decided upon, the district (with the exception of the Chandarpur-Padampur estate and the Phuljhar zamīndāri) was transferred from the Central Provinces to the Orissa Division of Bengal.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II.

## SAMBALPUR IN 1766.

THE first visit of an European to Sambalpur, of which there is any published account, is described in *A Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sumbhulpoor in the Province of Orissa*, by Mr. T. Motte, published in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1799. The journey was undertaken under the orders of Lord Clive, to whom the Rājā had sent a messenger, Sardār Khān, with a rough diamond as a sample and an invitation to send an agent to purchase diamonds on the spot. Lord Clive eagerly accepted this offer, as he wished to use diamonds as a convenient means of transmitting money to England and also thought it a good opportunity to open up negotiations with the Marāthās. The agent whom he selected was Mr. Motte, who describes his instructions as follows:—"His Lordship being then at a great loss for means of remitting money to England, proposed to me to return with the vakeel to the mines, and to endeavour to open the diamond trade. He offered to make it a joint concern, in which I was to hold a third, he the other two; all the expenses to be borne by the concern. The proposal dazzled me, and I caught at it without reflecting on the difficulties of the march, or on the barbarity of a country in which Mr. Mallock, sent by Mr. Henry Vansittart for the same purpose, durst only stay twenty-four hours. His Lordship instructed me to make what inquiries I could into the state of the Mahrattas, supposing that a Government connected by such very slight ties might be easily divided, and, by such division, that the power of a people so formidable in India might be weakened. He directed me also to sound whether he would not cede the province of Orissa for an annual tribute, and thereby give a contiguity to the British dominions in India, which would strengthen them greatly."

Mr. Motte left Calcutta on the 13th March 1766, taking with him a companion (Mr. Raby), an European servant, 3 horses, 2 camels, 3 tents, 30 native servants and 26 sepōys. He proceeded through Midnapore and Balasore to Cuttack, which he

reached on the 6th May. Here he had an interview with the Marāthā Governor, Bhawānī Pandit, who suspected that the mission to Sambalpur was merely a blind, and that he had been sent by Lord Clive "to form alliances with the mountaineers, through whose territories my road lay." Mr. Motte then laid before him Clive's proposal that Orissa should be handed over to the Company, "who should pay a stipulated sum and send a resident to the Court of Nagpoor as an hostage. Bowanee Pundit was too good a statesman not to comprehend the use which might be made of an alliance with the English. He caught the idea with the vivacity of a Mahratta, told me the interests of his court and ours were the same, that he would write what he had said to Janroojai, and desired me to write to Lord Clive. Business being finished, he became extremely cheerful, supplied me with guides and promised me every assistance."

Mr. Motte left Cuttack on the 10th May, and after marching to the south of the Mahānadi through Bānki, Khandparā and Daspallā, made his way through the Barmūl pass into Baud, where he was overtaken by a message from Bhawānī Pandit that his master Janoji must give up all thoughts of an alliance with the British at present, as he had been defeated and his capital, Nāgpur, taken by the Peshwā Mādho Rao. On the 28th May, 2½ months after he left Calcutta, Mr. Motte entered the Sambalpur territory, and here his troubles began. On the 29th the messenger whom he sent to announce his arrival returned with the news that the Rājā Ajit Singh was dead, and had been succeeded by his son "Obbi Singh" (Ubhaya Singh). He was directed to march to "Monisur," a place 5 miles from Sambalpur; and having done so, he encamped in a pleasant grove. But next morning there was a severe storm. The baggage tent, in which the sepoy and servants sought shelter, was struck by lightning, the ammunition stored there exploded, and the tent was set on fire. The sentry on guard was killed, and nine of the men died before morning and seven the next day. The situation in which he now found himself and his subsequent adventures are described by Mr. Motte as follows:—

"My situation was at this time truly critical. I was entering a place so remarkable for perfidy, that Captain Mallock durst not stay twenty-four hours in it; with a body reduced extremely low by a nervous fever, and no medical assistance at hand. The sepoy and other servants, on whom I depended for protection against secret treachery, but which, in their best state, were insufficient to guard against open violence, instead of



marching in good spirits, were obliged to be carried on a hurdle on the heads of two men; for almost all my people were burnt, several of whom died after I entered the town. These circumstances presented to me in all their terrors; but the state I found things in at Sumbhulpoor prevented many of the bad effects. Jite Sing, one of the rajah's natural brothers, came to congratulate me on my arrival in the Sumbhulpoor territories. He was shocked at the sight of my maimed people, and supplied me with labourers, who placed their bedding on hurdles, and carried them into the town like dead bodies. My entrance appeared rather like a funeral, than the conclusion of a successful march. The distance was only five miles to the place the rajah had pitched on for me to reside in; it was an outwork which had been added to the town in the manner of a ravelin. It formed an irregular triangle, two hundred yards in circumference, defended on two sides by a deep ditch and high mud wall, and covered towards the town by a mud wall ten feet high. The part allotted for me was surrounded also by a mud wall and contained two sheds used before as stables, which I gave up to the sick, pitching my tents for myself and those in health, until I could build a thatched house. I found the town in great confusion on account of the state of the Government ever since the death of the late rajah. To explain this more fully, I shall give the history of the last three years.

“In the year 1763, Ajeet Sing was rajah, and Deccan Roy dewan. This man, taking advantage of his master's indolence, acquired such an ascendancy, that he directed every thing according to his own will and pleasure. At length the rajah's wife roused him, by representing the extreme dependence of his situation. The rajah privately raised a party; for the dewan had obtained grants of so many villages, that his master durst not attack him openly. Assassination best suited the spirit of the government. The cowardice of the rajah, and the genius of the people, who were sensible that, in the midst of the disturbances consequent to such an act of treachery, the plunder of the dead and of many houses would fall to their share, came readily into the plan; and Ajeet Sing on the 16th of June, ordered the public hall to be cleared of everybody except Deccan Roy, on pretence that the Ranny would pass through it in her way to a temple, whither she was to pay her devotions, and would then speak to him. The dewan, not suspecting any violence, sat waiting for her, when eight or ten ruffians who had been concealed for the purpose, rushed out and cut him to pieces. This was the signal for plundering his house, which the populace instantly

did; and when the rajah sent a party to secure his share of the booty, they found nothing left. Peelo Roy was the principal actor in this tragedy; but Kasree, who had charge of the rajah's household, jealous lest he should become his master, by being appointed dewan, persuaded Ajeet Sing to keep that post vacant, sensible that when the rajah's indolent fit should come on, the administration of affairs would fall into his hands; and he judged right: for no sooner did Morpheus shed his poppies on his master's head, than Kasree became as powerful as ever Deccan Roy had been. But Peelo Roy, sensible that Kasree had stood between him and the desired post, did not suffer him to enjoy his master's favour long. He employed a villain, who cleft his skull as he was passing through the gateway of the rajah's palace. Peelo Roy, having thus removed the chief obstacle, was appointed dewan, and Ajeet Sing sunk into his usual insignificance.

"In the year 1764, Akber, a relation of Kasree, finding Peelo Roy's advance was incompatible with his safety, represented to Ajeet Sing how shameful it was that he, who had shaken off the fetters of so wise a man as Deccan Roy, should submit to be ruled by such a wretch as Peelo Roy. This representation had such an effect, that the rajah gave Akber a private order to murder him; however, the dewan being on his guard, no opportunity offered, until 27th August, a great holiday, when all the principal people of the town being assembled in the public hall with the rajah, at the dances exhibited on the occasion, and Peelo Roy retiring, Akber dispatched two or three ruffians after him, who murdered him as he was pressing through the crowd. In an instant the hall was cleared, every one running with the greatest alacrity to plunder his house. Akber succeeded to all the influence of his predecessor, and continued until the death of his master. Ajeet Sing died in the beginning of May 1766, not without strong suspicion of poison. It appeared he had resolved to destroy Akber, and on his death-bed, recommended the destruction of him to his son, Obbi Sing. His son, therefore, as soon as the funeral of the father was over, refused to return him the seal, but gave it to Kissun Bur Mullie. Akber, being commander of the troops in the capital, retired to his own house, which was in the midst of the town, where he fortified himself. In this state was the country when I arrived.

"On the 2nd June I paid the rajah a visit, being introduced by Jite Sing. Kissun Bur Mullie officiated as his minister. He told me his master would enter on business with me immediately. He complained much of the insolence of Akber, in defying his

master in his capital; and gave a hint that he expected my assistance. I heard all, but said little. The rajah, Obbi Sing, was sixteen years of age, looked very stupid; his eldest natural brother, who had the command of the troops, was haughty and impetuous; his other brother, Jite Sing, of a sweet, open disposition. The rajah returned my visit, but scarce spoke two words, though he seemed pleased with the presents I gave him. They consisted of two pieces of velvet, four of broadcloth, a fusee, a brace of pistols, a spying glass, and some other trifles. The next night Kissun Bur Mullie came, and represented to me that the principal objection to entering on business was the distracted state of the town, on account of the rebellion of Akber; and hinted a wish that I would assist him in seizing him. I excused myself from giving my advice, as not being master of the subject, and my assistance, by shewing the terrible condition of the small force I brought with me.

“The town became daily more confused by mobs and riots, inasmuch that I forbade any of my servants to go out of my quarters in the night; but my poor cook, disobeying that order, was next morning found murdered in the street. Matters came to a crisis on the 17th of June, at night, when Akber having collected his people, marched from his own house to the palace, secured the person of the rajah, and murdered every one who offered to oppose him. A massacre followed in the town, where three hundred of the dependents of Kissun Bur Mullie were put to death. I doubled my guards, and kept all my people together. There were in the rajah's service two Germans and two Frenchmen, who were employed in taking care of his guns; the two former were killed in the palace; the two latter, making their escape to me, were protected. My steward, having straggled in the morning, was seized by Akber's people, and carried before him, who, without ceremony, ordered him to be put to death. The news flew to me. I sent a man, acquainting Akber that I had as yet taken no part in the disputes; but that if he did not instantly release my servant, I would march my sepoys, and join the rajah's brothers, who were then defending themselves in their houses. This threat had the desired effect; the steward was sent to me, so frightened, that he was not in his senses. Akber was appointed dewan, and confined Kissun Bur Mullie in a dungeon, the entrance to which was by a trap door, whercon Akber always slept. In a country thus torn by dissensions, I had little prospect of doing any business; but the rains being set in, I could not return by land, nor could I get boats to transport me by water: so that I was obliged to sit down as contented as I could.

“As soon as Akber had established himself firmly in the Dewanee, I entered into a conversation with him in respect to the diamond trade; and here a great difficulty occurred; for Surdar Khan, who had returned with me, had reported to the dewan that he had delivered the diamond to Lord Clive, who had sent me to settle the price and pay for it. I had not brought more money with me than was necessary to pay my expenses, but had established a credit at Cuttac, whither I could send whenever it was necessary. This was a prudent precaution; for if I had had the money with me, Akber had undoubtedly plundered me, and paid himself. I answered that the diamond had been valued by the vakeel at 3,500 rupees, which sum I was ready to pay. He insisted on 6,000 rupees, and went away disgusted. I was a good deal surprised the next day to find that a proclamation was issued, that no person should supply me or my people with any provisions, nor have any conversation with us. This was a whimsical order, to be sure; however, I put as good a face on it as I could, and acquainted the dewan by message, that my sepoy would bear anything but starving; that if his subjects refused to take their money for provisions, I could not prevent their taking them by force. This matter was decided, like most other critical situations, by a circumstance which had nothing to do with it. Akber wanting a sum of money for other purposes, withdrew the prohibition, and sent me a few more diamonds, the price of which we settled and for which I paid him, having sent for the money from Cuttac.

“The above bears the appearance of a gasconade, but I was sensible Akber was by no means firmly established; for the rajah's two brothers maintained themselves in their houses, nor durst the dewan enter the quarter of the town they inhabited; whereas civil messages passed between them and me. Besides, my sepoy being recovered and trained, formed a respectable body on the parade. Being now reconciled to Government, I requested permission to go on to the places where the diamonds were found, but the minister made many scruples. He first said, that the river was so full, there was nothing to be seen; next, that the country was unsettled, the manners of the inhabitants of those parts so rude in their disposition, so mischievous, they were not to be trusted. I persisted; and after various evasions, catching him at length in a good humour, obtained his consent. He gave me his son-in-law as a guide, and a party of archers as a guard; for I was not willing to carry the sepoy, lest the novelty of their appearance should cause an alarm.

"I set out with Mr. Raby and a few servants, the 16th July. We travelled that day ten miles on the banks of the Maha Nuddee river, in which I frequently saw rocks peeping above the water, and halted at night at the foot of the hills. The next morning, having marched three miles, we passed the side of a rock which projected into the great river, and came to the mouth of the river Hebe, where the diamonds are found. A servant of the rajah, who had charge of this rich spot, met us with only three attendants. A countenance naturally morose, a voice studiously rough, and sentences affectedly short, with a desire of looking formidable, joined to form one of the most disagreeable human creatures I ever saw. Raby was so much out of humour with him, as to propose to me to beat him into good manners; but this brute expressed much surprise at the curiosity which brought me hither; and, after I had worked him into good humour by a present of two yards of scarlet broadcloth, became more communicative.

"He told me it was his business to search in the river Hebe, after the rains, for red earth washed down from the mountains, in which earth diamonds were always found. I asked him if it would not be better to go on the mountains and dig for that earth. He answered it had been done, until the Mahrattas extorted a tribute from the country; and to do so now would only increase that tribute. He shewed me several heaps of the red earth, some pieces of the size of small pebbles, and so on, till it resembles coarse brick-dust, which had been washed and the diamonds taken out. I was desirous of going towards the source of the river, but my guide told me it was impracticable during the rainy season. Where the Hebe river discharges itself into the Maha Nuddee, it is 200 yards wide. I went into it in a boat, and found a bay, near a mile in diameter, the banks of which were overshadowed by thick underwood. I with great labour got the boat forward about two miles to where the river poured from the mountains; then, convinced that what my guide had told me was true, I returned, not a little dissatisfied.

"On my return from this place, I paid a visit to the Naik Buns, the great snake worshipped by the mountainous rajahs, which they say is coeval with the world, which at his decease will be at an end. His habitation was the cavern at the foot of a rock, at the opening of which was a plain of 400 yards, surrounded by a moat. I understood he generally came out once a week, against which time such as make religious vows carry, kids or fowls, and picquet them on the plain. About nine in the morning his appearance was announced to me; I stood on the banks of

the moat opposite the plain. He was unwieldy, thicker in proportion to his length than snakes usually are, and seemed of that species the Persians call Ajdha. There was a kid and some fowls piqueted for him. He took the kid in his mouth, and was some time squeezing his throat to force it down, while he threw about his tail with much activity. He then rolled along to the moat, where he drank and wallowed in the mud. He returned to his cavern. Mr. Raby and I crossed the water in the afternoon, and supposed, from his print in the mud, his diameter to be upwards of two feet.\*

"A few days after I returned from this trip, Raby was seized with the fever of the country. We sat down to tea in the afternoon, when he looked and talked very wildly. I took him by the hand, felt him in a strong fever, and advised him to go to bed, from whence he never rose, but to the hour of his death, on the third day, continued light-headed. Charles Smith, my European servant, died with the same symptoms. When I read the funeral service over him, I could not but seriously reflect there was no one left to perform the same duty over me. Having now no European with me, I wished to leave a place where I was likely to do no business; but the rain prevented me. I found the people of the country tampered with my sepoy, and prevailed on one of them to desert. Conscious I was in their power, I thought it best to put a confidence in them. I paid them to the end of July; then mustering all my eloquence, I contrasted to them the horrors of the country we were in with the charms of that we had left; and told them the only chance of ever seeing that dear country again, rested on their adherence to me; that I should conduct them thither as soon as the season would permit. They were struck with my frankness, unanimously declared a perfect confidence in me, and not a man deserted afterwards. My time grew daily more burthensome, and I looked with anxiety for the day when I should leave Sumbhulpoor, where I was obliged to be always upon my guard.

"The beginning of September, Baboo Khan, detached by Jannoojie to the assistance of Bowanee Pundit, encamped near Sumbhulpoor with 300 cavalry. He demanded forage and money of the rajah; but not being supplied immediately, blocked up the town, and threatened to attack it. He applied to me. I advised Akber to dispatch him as soon as possible, and cautioned Baboo Khan not to attack the part of the town I was in, where I

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\* Lieutenant Kittoe, who visited Sambalpur in 1838, said he was informed that this reptile was still in existence and that "the diamond washers make offerings, if they neglect which, they suppose their search will be fruitless."

had put two guns I found into good order. The rajah delaying, Baboo Khan resolved to attack. He armed an elephant with a wooden shield on his forehead, from whence projected a strong iron spike. The driver, who was protected by a large wooden shield, attempted to drive him against one of the gates, in order to force it open; but the rajah's people, throwing a great quantity of fireworks from the gate, frightened the beast, so that he could not be brought to the charge. A few days after, Baboo Khan marched.

"At length, at the end of September the clouds, which had covered the tops of the mountains from the time the rain set in, dispersed themselves, and the season was pronounced at an end. I prepared for my departure. The first of October, the rajah came to see me, and begged everything he saw; and it was with great difficulty I could save my compass. On the 2nd, in the morning, I went to take leave of him. He and Akber made great professions of their attachment to the English, and of their desire of being dependent on them; at parting he presented me with a rough diamond set in a ring. I believe they were all glad to part with me; for the rajah and his brothers were convinced I would not assist in turning out the dewan, while Akber feared I would change my mind. I marched in the afternoon through the town and suburbs, and encamped at the rajah's garden, three miles beyond it. Some of the principal people waited upon me in the evening, and advised me to be on my guard against the treachery of Akber, who had sent a force after me to cut me off. I answered, in such case Lord Clive would send forces to revenge my death, by destroying all the country with fire and sword.

"I was not alarmed by these insinuations, but at the same time took every precaution. I kept near the banks of the river, and embarked such part of my baggage as I had not immediate occasion for in boats. I armed all my servants with spears. I took into my service twenty men, inhabitants of Balasore, with match-locks. I rose at four, sent on my breakfast apparatus, which I ordered to be prepared at Garey. The tents were struck, and thirteen sepoy were sent with them; the kitchen furniture followed, and after it the rest of the sepoy. As soon as they were at a little distance, I mounted my horse, or got into my palankeen, attended by the match-lock men. I passed all my people, and came to the breakfast table, where I sat till all my people passed me again. I then pushed by them; and, going through several cultivated spots, came to the village Whoamah; and ordered the tents to be pitched in a grove without the town,

Whoamah is a large village on the banks of the Maha Nuddee, surrounded with a live bamboo fence. The commander would not suffer any of my people to go into the town, nor would he come to see me; but he sent shopkeepers with necessaries to sell to me. In the evening they all returned into the town; and although I did not like the sullenness of the commander, yet, as I found it was tempered with fear, I was under no apprehensions. The march on 4th October was through a mountainous uncultivated country. Twelve miles from Whoamah I passed the bounds of the province of Sumbhulpoor."

The general result of his mission is described by Mr. Motte as follows. "I now contemplate, that, after so perilous a journey, I had carried no one point I wished; but having resided during the most unwholesome season among a perfidious people, thought myself happy in having escaped with my life. The opening of the diamond trade was prevented by the indolence of the inhabitants, and by their wretched dependence on the Mahrattas. The alliance with Jannoojei was obstructed by the very critical situation of his affairs, and by the distracted state of his family. The very severe illness Lord Clive laboured under, prevented him from pursuing the plan for the cession of Orissa, though he entered on it with great alacrity; and the only satisfaction I had, was a promise to be employed in the negociation, should it ever be resumed."

Mr. Motte also gives the following account of the Sambalpur State at the time of his visit. "The Sumbhulpoor province is so called from its capital; but the rajah takes the title of Rajah of eighteen forts. The province extends from latitude  $20^{\circ} 50'$  to  $22^{\circ} 15'$  north, and from longitude  $83^{\circ} 20'$  to  $84^{\circ} 50'$ . It is bounded to the west by the countries of Boora Shumbur and Rottunpoor; to the east by Bimbera, Lundacole and Boad; to the south by Patna and Coondon; to the north by Gungpoor and Soorgooja. The air of Sumbhulpoor is very unwholesome, owing to the great vicissitudes of heat and cold; for the valleys, the only inhabited parts, are impenetrable to the breezes, which, during the hot season, render the torrid zone tolerable, while, if a shower comes, such a piercing wind comes with it from the mountains, that I have, within twenty-four hours, felt the weather hotter and colder than I ever felt it in Bengal within twelve months. This makes the inhabitants subject to rheumatisms, and this occasioned every person I carried with me to be affected with violent fevers. The soil in the valleys is rich loam, in which grain or pulse thrive well. Yet rice is the principal grain cultivated, because the harvest of it is over before



January, when the Mahrattas overrun the country. The mountains abound with gold and diamonds; but the natives are deterred from working the mines by their indolence and fear of the Mahrattas, to whom their riches would only point them out as a more desirable prey. They are, therefore, content to wash the sands of the rills which descend from them: nor is the quantity of gold they procure thereby despicable.

“The ordinary revenues of the country are paid in kind, and the regulation of the collections is simple. Each village being rated at a certain number of measures of paddy, or rice, in the chaff, the ground is divided among the inhabitants in this manner. Every man, as soon as he is of proper age, is enrolled as a soldier, and allowed half a measure (about six pounds) of rice per day for his subsistence, and three rupees per annum for clothing. As much arable land is then made over to him as is supposed to produce  $242\frac{1}{4}$  measures. He is to deliver to the rajah, or his order,  $60\frac{3}{4}$  measures, and the remainder is for his own use. The land is given in charge to his wife, who feeds him, and provides for paying the rent; if the ground produces more than it is rated at, it is her profit; if less, her loss. The reserved rent of three or four villages, being one-fourth the produce of the land, is applied to the use of the rajah's household. The reserved rent of the rest is given to his relations, or principal servants, who by these means have all the inhabitants dependent on them. The extraordinary revenues consist of duties on merchants and others passing through the country, and of fines. The former are not settled, but depend on the conscience of the rajah; and indeed, within three years, since his people robbed and murdered a considerable Nagpoor merchant near this place, none have passed this way. The latter, also, are entirely arbitrary; nor is it necessary to find a man guilty of any crime in order to fine him, in a country where money cannot be acquired but by means prejudicial to society.

“The government of Sumbhulpoor is strictly feudal, the fiefs of which being originally official, are, by the weakness of the sovereign, become hereditary. . . . It appears from the history I have given that all the evils attending the feudal system were centered in this government; for such is the danger of degrading a man from an office, that it is seldom effected without murdering him; for, if he can fly to his fief, he is able there to raise an opposition dangerous to the sovereign. The former dewans were possessed of villages at a distance from the capital, and were of course liable to surprise; but Akber the present dewan's power

lay in the capital itself, so that he was mayor of the palace, and made the rajah prisoner at last.

“When they fell under the yoke of the Mahrattas, the oppression of that vile government broke their spirits, and their custom of inactivity became a total aversion to labour. They threw the cultivation of the lands, and all other works of fatigue, on the sex designed by nature for softer toils. The sex, losing that gentle tenderness for which the women of England are famed, lost all the power of pleasing; while the men, becoming worse than brutes, addicted themselves to the most shocking of all vices. I have been more than once requested to join in effecting the destruction of the dewan. Had the women desired my assistance to make a female dewan, I had granted it, since they form evidently the superior sex. So indelicate are the men with respect to the women, that I have been introduced and obliged to show respect to a man of consequence in the morning, whose wife has in the afternoon brought a load of wood of her own cutting, as much as she could stagger under, and sold it me for a penny.

“The natives in general are very abstemious, eating only once in twenty-four hours, and that in the evening. Their meal is then two pounds of rice; and they keep the water in which it has been boiled for drinking the next day; raw water being apt to give them a flux. The men are low in stature, but well made, lazy, treacherous and cruel. But to these ill qualities of the tiger, the Almighty has also, in his mercy, added the cowardice of that animal; for, had they an insensibility of danger, equal to their inclination for mischief, the rest of mankind must unite to hunt them down. They profess themselves Hindus, but practise only that part of the religion which consists of external ceremonies.

“The common disease of the country is a violent fever, the first symptom of which is being light-headed. The doctor first enjoins the patient to vow a sacrifice to Sumbhute, the deity of the place, to expiate her wrath. He then proceeds to exercise the patient gently if his fever be mild, but with greater violence if he be light-headed. They then employ five or six men to hold the patient in a sitting posture, while the doctor jabbars over a form of words, blowing in his face at each period. This provokes him very much: he swears, abuses, and curses horribly; this is all placed to the account of the devil in him. They aggravate his rage by holding a burning horse's hoof, so that all the smoke goes up his nostrils. He grows outrageous, till, quite exhausted by the struggles he makes to extricate himself from

those that hold him, he falls down almost insensible; and a profuse perspiration succeeding, they cover him up close to encourage it, which carries off the fever. He sleeps usually twelve hours, and awakes so much emaciated as is surprising. Thus he is cured of his madness, by means which drive a sane man out of his senses. If the patient is so much exhausted that he cannot struggle, the doctor pronounces the devil to be too much for him.

“I was surprised to find among these people a trace of mechanics which seems to show they have once known them. They use stilliards instead of scales. In every other respect we may say that, if a state of ignorance is a state of nature, the inhabitants of this country are perfect naturals, since they are as naked with respect to rational improvements as when they were born.”

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PEOPLE.

WHEN the first census was taken in 1872, the population of the district, as now constituted, was returned at 392,275 persons. In 1881 the census showed a population of 520,124, but this phenomenal increase (32 per cent.) was far in excess of the natural growth of the people, and there can be no doubt that it was largely due to the incompleteness of the first census. Between 1881 and 1891 the growth of population continued, 619,181 persons being enumerated at the census of 1891. The increase was nearly 19 per cent., the greater part of which occurred in the zamindāris and should probably be attributed to increased efficiency of enumeration. The result of the census carried out in 1901 was to show that the district contained a population of 638,992, of whom 274,051 were enumerated in the Sambalpur subdivision and 364,941 in the Bargarh subdivision. The increase since the census of 1891 was only 3·2 per cent., and would in all probability have been far larger, had it not been for the famine of 1899-1900, when the reported death-rate rose to the appalling figure of 108·18 per mille, owing chiefly to a severe epidemic of cholera and to the mortality among the crowds of wanderers who flocked into the district from the adjoining States. In spite of this check to the growth of population, there has, according to the census returns, been an increase of no less than 62·89 per cent. since 1872.

In the district, as a whole, there are 167 persons per square mile, and the density of population is less than in any district in Bengal except Angul and three districts of Chotā Nāgpur, viz., Rānchī, Palāmau and Singhbhūm. The Sambalpur subdivision supports 171 persons per square mile, as against 164 per square mile in the Bargarh subdivision. The difference between the two subdivisions, small as it is, may perhaps be explained by the difference in their physical aspects. The largest open tract of country in the district, and also the most closely cultivated, is found in the Bargarh subdivision south of the Bārapahār hills, where the zamindāris of Barpāli, Bheran, Kharsal and

GROWTH  
OF POPU-  
LATION.GENERAL  
CHARAC-  
TERISTICS.  
Density of  
popula-  
tion.

Pātkulandā are situated. But a large area is occupied by the uninhabited Bārapahār hills, and to the south and west the country is hilly and covered with jungle. In the Sambalpur subdivision, on the other hand, there are extensive areas of open country, especially in the neighbourhood of the town of Sambalpur and along the northern bank of the Mahānadi, where there is a fairly level tract, most of which is suitable for rice cultivation.

Excluding the Government reserved forests, the zamīndāri reserves and the Mahānadi river, the district supports a population of 215 souls per square mile, and in the area under regular cultivation there are 373 persons per square mile. It is noticeable that in recent years there has been little increase in the density of population in the cultivated area. This is attributed to the fact that the extension of cultivation has been almost commensurate with the growth of population. In fact, in the Sambalpur subdivision there has been an actual decrease in the pressure of the people on the soil, because the spread of cultivation has been greater than the increase of population, cultivators having extended their operations from the level plain into the hills and forest villages.

**Migration.** A notable feature of the census statistics for the last 20 years is that the volume of immigration from the neighbouring districts and States has gradually increased, while the number of emigrants to the neighbouring country has fallen off, though emigrants still outnumber immigrants. Formerly there was an exodus of coolies to the Assam tea gardens, where 11,613 persons from this district were enumerated in 1901. The exploitation of the district for tea garden labour began with the completion of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway, but seems to be on the decline, the number of registered emigrants falling from 7,712 in 1902-03 to 1,254 and 853 in the two following years, and to 214 in 1905-06 and 64 in 1906-07. On the other hand, it is reported that the decline in the number of labourers going to Assam may have been more apparent than real owing to the existence of unlicensed emigration from Native States, which in all probability affected inhabitants of this district as well. However this may be, it would appear that the exodus to Assam has almost died out, and is not likely to revive in the absence of local famine or of more attractive prospects for labour than are at present offered in Assam. There seems to be, indeed, no reason why any one should emigrate from the district, for it is more prosperous than the districts further east, wages have risen, and the cultivated area is increasing.

"The general tendency," writes the Settlement Officer, "of these movements is favourable to the district. The Assam emigrants are chiefly thriftless aboriginals, and, especially of late years, many of them belong to the criminal classes. The emigrants to the States are also aboriginals, unable or unwilling to compete in cultivation with Hindus. On the other hand, the immigrants, both from Feudatory States and from British districts, are usually steady cultivators, who have been attracted by the light rents of the district and by the opportunities for exploiting forest land. It is true that many of the immigrants date from famine years, but of the crowds who then came in many died, many returned to their homes, and only the fittest labourers survived and settled."

The only town in the district is Sambalpur, which contains a population of 12,870. The remainder of the population is contained in 1,984 villages, of which thirteen contain over 2,000 inhabitants. Five of these villages are situated in the Sambalpur subdivision, viz., Rāmpelā (4,658), Jharsagurā (4,306), Katarbagā (2,279), Arhāparā (2,233) and Lairā (2,229). The remaining eight are situated in the Bargarh subdivision, viz., Barpāli (4,414), Bargarh (3,609), Kumbhāri (2,668), Remendā (2,565), Torā (2,135), Padampur (2,133), Tāmparsarā (2,091) and Katapāli (2,082). Towns and villages.

The most important of these large villages are Rāmpelā, Jharsagurā, Barpāli and Bargarh. Rāmpelā is an agricultural village with a large community of weavers, and is the centre of some trade. The size of Jharsagurā is due to its position at the junction of the Sambalpur branch railway with the main line, and also to a large settlement of grain-dealers established on land acquired by Government for the purpose. Barpāli, the residence of the principal zamīndār of the district, is an old town with a large community of silk-weavers and a considerable trade. Bargarh, the headquarters of the *tahsīl* of the same name, has an important market, which collects and forwards to Sambalpur most of the surplus grain of Pātnā State and the Bargarh plain. There is but little tendency on the part of the rural population to form towns, but rather the contrary, the population increasing most largely in those tracts where most cultivable waste lands are available.

Oriyā is the main vernacular of the district, being spoken by no less than 474,367 persons or 74 per cent. of the population. LANG- UAGE.

The Oriyā of Sambalpur is in many ways different from the purer tongue spoken in the sea-board districts of Orissa. This is

due to the fact that Sambalpur was until a recent date largely isolated from the rest of Orissa, and received many linguistic and other impressions from the neighbouring districts of the Central Provinces. Dialectic differences and peculiarities are, indeed, so marked that a person not possessing an intimate knowledge of Oriyā might almost mistake the language of the common people for a new dialect. The peculiarities in the vernacular may perhaps be best illustrated by giving a few selected simple sentences and mentioning some of their divergences from standard Oriyā.

(1) *Bābur buā ketebele āsi āmrība, nāi jāni*, "I do not know when the little boy's father will come." The word *buā* meaning "father" is not used in eastern Orissa; *āmrība*, meaning, with *āsi*, "will arrive," would not be intelligible to the ordinary Oriyā; and the placing of a negative before a verb in *nāi jāni* resembles Hindi. (2) *Nuni tu Misra gharar bui sāngare gote āmba āu gote letir lāgi kalihoi hene je galā? Nihetāl dishbāku*, "My little girl quarrelled with the little girl of a Brāhman's house about an unripe mango and a ripe mango. Where has she gone? She is as yet nowhere to be seen." The words *bui* meaning "a little girl of the Brāhman caste" and *nuni* meaning "a little girl of a non-Brāhman caste" are not ordinary Oriyā; neither is *nihetāl*, which means "not till now." (3) *Mādhba haliā mishā chora bāgir luchlāna. Nār āibā kāen?* "The ploughman Mādhba has also hidden himself like a thief. Will he not come?" Here Mādhba (a name) is used for Mādhba (cf. Madna for Madan and *kudli* for *kadali*) while *mishā* (also, *bāgir* (like), *luchlāna* (has hidden himself), *āibā kāen* (will he come?)) are all unknown to Oriyā. (4) *Pān tike juin tike, ke ānbā?* "Who will bring a little water and a little fire?" Here *pān* is used instead of *pāni* (cf. *māl* and *jāt* for *māli* and *pāti*); and *jui*, meaning fire, is a word which is known neither in Bengal nor Orissa proper, but is used in Assam.

Among other words common to Assam and the Oriyā of Sambalpur, but not known in Bengal, may be mentioned *karchāi*, a ladle; *oā*, wet; *gudā*, dust or dry grass reduced to dust; *topā*, a drop; and *ofrā*, a cast-off or unnecessary thing. The Oriyās of Sambalpur, again, say *Mu ulgi heuchi*, i.e., "I bow down," and *clag* in Assam means "bowing down;" *phāl* is used, as in Assamese, for a side, e.g., *e phāl*, *se phāl*, i.e., "this side or that side;" and the Oriyā *māhālā* corresponds to the Assamese *mālīha*, both meaning "gratis," e.g., one gets a thing *māhālā* or for nothing.\* On the other hand, two forms of the letters *i* and *n* are

\* B. C. Mazumdar, *The Bhuiyās*, Modern Review (Allahābād), February 1907.

pronounced as in Bengali, and the pronunciation of *chh* at the end of a word (*e.g.*, *karchhi*) is like that of *sh* in some parts of Eastern Bengal.\*

Hindi was made the court language in 1896, but, as mentioned in Chapter II, this arrangement having proved unworkable, Oriyā, the mother-tongue of the great majority, was restored in 1903. Hindi.

Hindi is spoken by 128,345 persons, nearly all of whom use the Chhattisgarhī dialect of Eastern Hindi, a few only speaking the Baghelī dialect. The latter is the dialect of Baghelkhand, while the former is the vernacular of Chhattisgarh, being called Lariā, which is merely a local name for Chhattisgarhī. The difference between Chhattisgarhī and the other two dialects of Eastern Hindi, Baghelī and Awadhī, is not great. For instance, *is*, the termination of the past tense (*e.g.*, *kahis*, he said; *māris*, he struck), which is what everybody notices in Chhattisgarhī, is pre-eminently the typical shibboleth of a speaker of Eastern Hindi, and is commonly heard in Calcutta from servants belonging to Oudh. Dr. Grierson is, indeed, of opinion that if a Chhattisgarhī speaker was set down in Oudh, he would find himself at home with the language of the locality in a week. The same authority holds that this dialect found its way through Jubbulpore and Mandla, being introduced in comparatively late times by the Aryans who originally settled there. Thenceforward, owing to its geographical isolation, the dialect developed its peculiarities.

The principal tribal dialects are (1) Dravidian languages, such as Oraon, Gondī and Kisān, which are spoken by 18,995 persons, (2) Mundā languages, such as Kol or Mundāri, which is used by 8,879 persons, and (3) Khariā used by 4,110 persons. Of these tribal dialects the most important is Oraon or Kurukh. Kisān, as spoken in Sambalpur, has been identified with Korā, the language of a minor Mundā tribe; while Gondī has practically disappeared as a separate language, only 178 persons speaking it at the last census. Kol or Mundāri, on the other hand, is spoken by 93 per cent. of the total Kol population, and Khariā by 93 per cent. of the Khariās. Tribal dialects.

The great majority of the population are Hindus, their number being returned at the last census at 595,790 or 90 per cent. of the population. Practically all the remainder are Animists, who, with a strength of 38,935, represent 6 per cent. RELI-  
GIONS.

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\* I am indebted for the above account of the Oriyā of Sambalpur to Bābu B. C. Mazumdar, B. A., M. R. A. S., of Sambalpur.



of the population. Other religions have few representatives, viz., Muhammadans (3,539), Christians (714) and Jains (14).

Hindu  
sects;

Among the Hindu sects found in this district three call for special notice, viz., the Kabirpanthis, Satnāmis and Kumbhipatiās.

Kabir-  
panthis.

The Kabirpanthis, or followers of the path of Kabir, are a small but increasing sect, numbering 15,668 in 1901 as compared with 11,442 in 1891. The founder of the sect was Kabir (1380-1420 A.D.), a weaver and Vaishnava reformer, who preached the equality of all men before God, and rejected distinctions of sect, caste and rank. The sect founded by him began, like other reforming sects, by the abolition of caste distinctions, and was, therefore, a schism against Hinduism and the authority of the Brāhmins. It now recognizes caste, and is practically on the same level as any other Hindu sect, the only social result which it produces being that the Kabirpanthi members of a caste frequently form a separate endogamous division, a fact which is popularly ascribed to their abstaining from meat and liquor. The worship of idols is also prohibited, but practice lags behind precept, and some members of the sect are said to show a tendency to idolatry. The weaving castes, such as the Pankās, are usually Kabirpanthis, because, it is said, Kabir was a weaver, and the Brāhmins call it the weavers' religion; but a number of the Aghariās of Sambalpur have also become Kabirpanthis.

Until recently the head of the sect was the Mahant of Kawardha, but owing to a disputed succession their allegiance is divided and a Mahant living at Kudarmal in Bilāspur enjoys the real homage of most of them.\* There is a regular hierarchical organization among the Kabirpanthis. The chief Mahant appoints a certain number of deputies, called Bhandāris or Mahants, from the more advanced of his followers. These Mahants are spread all over the country, and there are also a number of hereditary lieutenants of the chief *guru* with fixed seats or *gadīs* in various parts. There is, moreover, an itinerant order of ascetics, who travel about asking alms and reciting the precepts of their faith.†

Satnāmis.

The Satnāmis are a smaller sect, which in 1901 numbered 1,213 as compared with 116 in 1891. The sect derives its name from the fact that its founder proclaimed the perfect equality of all men and the worship of the one true god under the title of *Satnām* or the true name. It appears to have been introduced in this part of the country between 1820 and 1830 A.D. by a

\* R. V. Russell, *Central Provinces Census Report of 1901*, Part I, p. 84.  
B. Robertson, *Central Provinces Census Report of 1891*, Part I, p. 73.

Chamār named Ghāsīdās, who retired to the forests of Sonakan in Bilāspur for six months and returned proclaiming himself the recipient of a divine message. He inculcated seven principles, including abstinence from spiritous liquor, meat and certain vegetables, such as lentils and tomatoes, whose juice resembles blood; the abolition of idol worship; the prohibition of the use of cows for ploughing and of working oxen after midday; and the worship of the true name of God alone. Caste was abolished and all men were to be socially equal except the family of Ghāsīdās, in which the priesthood of the cult was to be hereditary. His successor was Bālakdās, who was murdered because he exasperated the Brāhmans by assuming the sacred thread.

The sect is practically confined to the Chamārs. Most of them call themselves Satnāmis, but only a few observe the precepts of the sect, abstaining from forbidden food, from the use of tobacco, and from the worship of strange gods. When a Satnāmi Chamār is married a ceremony called *satlok* takes place within three years of the wedding. A feast is given to the caste-people, and during the night the woman retires to the house, and one or more of the men present, who are nominated by her and are called *gurus*, are allowed to go in to her. It is also stated that during his annual progresses it was the practice for the chief *guru*, the successor of Ghāsīdās, to be allowed access to any of the wives of the Chamārs whom he might select, and that this was considered rather an honour than otherwise by the husband. The Satnāmis are now becoming ashamed of these customs, and they are gradually being abandoned.\*

The Kumbhipatiās are a sect peculiar to Sambalpur, to whom Kumbhi-attention was first drawn in 1880, when a party of fanatics went <sup>patiās.</sup> to Puri with the object of burning the idol of Jagannāth. They were residents of Sambalpur and stated that they were induced to come to Puri in consequence of one of their co-religionists having been commanded by their *guru*—an invisible being without shape or form—to bring the images of Jagannāth, Balarām and Subhadra out of the temple and burn them on the road. In obedience to what they believed to be a divine command, a body of men and women left their homes in Sambalpur. When within a few miles of Puri, 12 men and 3 women separated themselves from the main body and preceded them to the temple. These 15 persons, who were almost in a state of nudity, came up to the temple, shouting "*Alekh*," "*Alekh*." Having forced their way into the building, they proceeded to break down the door of the *Bhogamandapa*, the building in which the offerings of the

\* R. V. Russell, *Central Provinces Census Report of 1901*, Part I, pp. 86, 87.

worshippers are usually displayed. They then made their way into the great hall of the temple in front of the shrine, but found the door called *Jay-bijay* shut. On this, they went out into the enclosure and rushed about like madmen, endeavouring to find an entrance in some other direction. In the struggle which took place, one of them fell or was pushed on to the stone pavement. He was lifted up by some of his companions and was assisted out of the temple, and shortly after expired.\*

The rioters being inhabitants of Sambalpur, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces was asked to furnish particulars of the sect and its tenets, and in compliance with this request gave the following information:—"There is a peculiar sect of Hindu dissenters in the Sambalpur district, known as Kumbhipatiās. The word Kumbhipatiā is derived from *kumbhi*, the name of a kind of tree,† and *pat*, the bark of a tree; and the sect is so-called because its followers make ropes from the bark of the tree and wear them round their waists. The religion is also known as that of *Alekh*, and its followers claim revelation as its foundation. Alekhsāmī, the god incarnate, used, it is said, to reside in the Himālayas, but about the year 1864 he came to Malbaharpur in Bānki in the Cuttack district, and there revealed a new religion to 64 persons, the principal of whom was Gobind Dās; and it was chiefly owing to the exertions of the disciples that the religion was propagated. Alekhsāmī (which signifies "the lord whose attributes cannot be described in writing") removed to Dhenkānāl, a Penda'ory State, where for 3 years immediately preceding his death he led the life of a mendicant and wanderer. Although the religion originated in Cuttack, it spread more rapidly in the district of Sambalpur, and men of all classes and castes, except the Oriyā Brāhmins, are freely embracing it. It was not so much the peculiarity of the rules of any particular caste or sect that tended to increase the number of converts as the position in life of the converts themselves: for example, in Khindā the people of a whole village embraced the Kumbhipatiā religion because the *gaontia* had done so. The names of some 30 villages are given as those in which the Kumbhipatiās chiefly reside."

Further details are given in the *Central Provinces Census Report of 1881*, where the following account of the Kumbhipatiās is quoted from the Census Report of Sambalpur:—"Their religion,

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\* C. E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors* (1901), Vol. II, pp. 733-735.

† *Kumbhi* is the Hindī name for the yellow cotton tree (*Cochlospermum Gos. aypium*).

also known as *Alekh*, appears to have originated in Angul and the Dhenkānāl Feudatory State about the year 1866. The name of the founder of the religion appears unknown, and its followers state that he is a spiritual being without form, who lives in heaven. His chief disciple, Gobind Dās, is dead ; another known as Narsingh Dās has erected his *math* (temple) in Bānki. The Kumbhipatiās have another temple in Malbahar in Bānki. They have a book called *mālīkā*, which contains predictions. They are divided into three sects, the Kumbhipatiā Gosāins, the Kānapathiā Gosāins, and Ashritas. The two former sects have renounced the world ; the followers of the one do not eat with those of the other. They appear to be of dirty habits, not washing after easing themselves, and not bathing at all. The third sect, called Ashrita, do not renounce the world, nor deem celibacy essential, nor are they turned out of caste. They look up to the other two sects as their *gurus* or spiritual guides, and follow their religion. They bathe in the early morning, and all three sects turn their faces towards the sun, at time of rising and setting, and prostrate themselves five or seven times. They do not eat after sunset. Each sect has a separate temple or place of prayer. They recognize *Bhāgabat*, one of the Hindu religious books, but interpret it differently to the Hindus. They do not respect the images of the Hindu gods, arguing that as no one has ever seen the Supreme Being, it is impossible to form his image. They believe in the existence of thirty-three crores of Hindu gods and goddesses, but do not obey them, asserting that it is not necessary to obey the servant but only the master. Their worship consists of prayer and praise to the immaterial Being, whom they call *Alekh*."

Bābu Bijay Chandra Mazumdār of Sambalpur has kindly furnished further information regarding the sect, which conflicts in some respects with that given above. He states that the leader under whose instructions the Kumbhipatiās sought to destroy the idol of Jagannāth was one Bhīm Bhoi, a blind and illiterate man, possessed however of considerable mental power. This Bhīm Bhoi had his seat at Khaliāpālī in the Sonpur Feudatory State ; and Khaliāpālī is still the principal *Guru Duār*, or hierarch's seat of the Kumbhipatiās. Bhīm Bhoi gave new life to the Kumbhipatiā doctrine and made the cult popular throughout Sambalpur. Some Brahmans indeed openly embraced the religion by throwing away their Brahmanical threads. They worship no god ; prayer is never offered ; and the temples are merely *maths*. All the religious books of the Hindus, and not only the *Bhāgabat*, are interpreted in a fanciful manner, according to the *Alekh* doctrine.

Formerly no garment was used, and at times the bark of trees only covered their shame. The lay Kumbhipatiās observe the customary caste system, but the specially initiated do not. It is difficult to obtain much reliable information regarding the Kumbhipatiās owing to the fact that they do not disclose their secret doctrines to the uninitiated.

**Animism.** The proportion of Animists is higher than in any district in Bengal outside the Chotā Nāgpur plateau. The name Animism, which for want of a better nomenclature is used for an amorphous congeries of pre-Hindu religious ideas, includes a number of diverse cults; but briefly it may be described as "the belief which explains to primitive man the constant movements and changes in the world of things by the theory that every object which has activity enough to affect him in any way is animated by a life and will of his own."\* Its leading features have been summed up as follows in the Census Report of India for 1901:— "It conceives of man as passing through life surrounded by a ghostly company of powers, elements, tendencies, mostly impersonal in their character, shapeless phantasms of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed. Some of these have departments or spheres of influence of their own: one presides over cholera, another over small-pox, another over cattle disease; some dwell in rocks, others haunt trees, others again are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls or with strange pools bidden in the depths of the hills. All of them require to be diligently propitiated by reason of the ills which proceed from them, and usually the land of the village provides the ways and means for this propitiation."†

The description which Captain Forsyth gives in the *Highlands of Central India* of the religion of the Gonds, who in this district constitute 8 per cent. of the population, may be taken as typical of the origin and nature of the animistic beliefs of the people. "The foundation of their creed appears to be a vague pantheism, in which all nature is looked upon as pervaded by spiritual powers, the most prominent and powerful of which are personified and propitiated by simple offerings. Every prominent mountain top is the residence of the Spirit of the Hill, who must be satisfied by an offering before a *dhya* can be cut on its slopes. The forest is peopled by woodland spirits, for whom a grove of typical trees is commonly left standing as a refuge in clearing away the jungle. When the field is sown, the god of rice fields (Khodo Pen) has to be satisfied, and again when the crop is

\* W. Crooke, *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1907), Vol I, p. 431.

† *Report of the Census of India, 1901, Part I, p. 355.*

reaped. The malignant powers receive regular propitiation. The tiger god has a hut built for him in the wilderness that he may not come near their dwellings. The goddess of small-pox and of cholera receives offerings chiefly when her ravages are threatened. Among such elementary powers must be reckoned the ghosts of the deceased, which have to be laid by certain ceremonies. These consist in conjuring the ghost into something tangible, in one case into the body of a fish caught in the nearest water, in another, into a fowl chosen by omen. The object, whatever it is, is then brought to the house of the deceased and propitiated for a certain time, after which it is formally consigned to rest by burial. The spirits of persons killed by wild animals are believed to be specially malignant, and are "laid" with much care and ceremony. None of these powers of nature are represented by idols, nor have they any particular forms or ceremonies of worship. They are merely localised by some vague symbol; the mountain god by a daub of vermilion on some prominent rock; the tree god by a pile of stones thrown round the stem of a tree, and so on. At these the simple savage pays his devotions, almost furtively, as he passes in the gray of the morning to his day's labour, by a simple prostration, or perhaps by the offering of a handful of rice or an onion. More elaborate acts of worship are engaged in by the community at certain seasons, and then these primitive powers may be joined with the more personal deities derived from their neighbours in the general act of worship.

"In the next stage the tribes have added certain fetishes to the list of powers. The principal of these is an iron spear head called Phārsā Pen, and he is supported by the Bell god, the Chain god, a god composed of some copper money hung up in a pot, shapeless stones, and many other objects, the power attributed to which is purely arbitrary and unconnected with any natural agency. To this stage appears to belong the medicine man and dealer in witchcraft, who still possesses considerable power among the tribes. These medicine men can scarcely be called priests and are not an hereditary caste. Their business is to exorcise evil spirits, to interpret the wishes of the fetish, to compel rain, and so on. Some of them seem to have acquired the power of throwing themselves into a sort of trance, in which they are visited by the deity.

"In a still more advanced stage the Gonds have resorted to hero worship; but it is curious that all the deified heroes they reverence are of purely Hindu derivation. The chief are Bhima, one of the five Pāndu brethren, who is represented by his mythical club either in stone or wood; Hardyāl, a Rajput hero

of much later date; Dulha Deo, the apotheosis of a bridegroom, and many others. Lastly come the divinities of the Hindu pantheon. Amongst a race whose blessings are few and hardships many, it is not surprising that the malevolent members of the Hindu pantheon should have found more acceptance than the benevolent deities. Vishnu is scarcely recognised by them, except in his one terrible development of Narsingha or the Man-Tiger; while Siva, the Destroyer, with his formidable consort Kālī and son Bhairava are the favourite objects of reverence among the more advanced of the tribes. These are represented by rude idols, Siva himself in his usual phallic form; and a Brāhman in many cases officiates at their shrines. Here for the first time we find mythology—the science of priests—at work. In their earlier stages the tribes had no priests, no hierarchy of gods, and consequently no mythology. Now legends are invented to connect the tribes and their earlier gods with the great web of Hindu fiction, and bring them within the dominion of caste and priesthood."

The census statistics show a considerable variation in the number of those returned as Animists, viz., 46,652 in 1881 and 26,353 in 1891 in the district as formerly constituted, and 38,935 in 1901 in the district as now constituted. It is noticeable that, in spite of the diminished area of the district, the number of Animists has greatly increased during the last decade; but probably not much reliance should be placed on the figures, the marked differences at each census being explained by the difficulties attending a correct differentiation between Hindus and Animists and by the personal equation of the census staff. Practically all the Animists are members of aboriginal races, such as Gond, Khond, Binjhāl, Kurā, Khariā, Kol, Savarā, etc.; but many of these have now been brought within the fold of Hinduism, profess the Hindu religion, frequent the Hindu temples, and take a pleasure in reading Hindu religious and mythological books. This is only natural, for the aborigines living in the plains are surrounded by a large Hindu community, and adopt their manners, customs and religion to ensure the sympathy of their neighbours.

Of the 714 Christians enumerated in 1901, altogether 567 were natives. The Baptist Mission has a station at Sambalpur, and maintains a school there; during the winter months the missionaries carry on evangelistic work among the lower castes and aboriginal tribes in the wilder parts of the district. The Lutheran Mission, with headquarters at Chakradharpur, also works in the district. It was reported in 1901 that the converts of the Baptist Mission numbered 308 and those of the Lutheran Mission 112.

The population of Sambalpur has been recruited principally by immigration from Orissa, of which there appear to have been several different waves dating back several centuries. It is also composed to a certain extent of aboriginals, who have swept in from Chotā Nāgpur, and there has been some admixture of their blood with that of the Aryan immigrants.

The aboriginal element is a large one, representing 33 per cent. of the population in 1901, and includes no less than 10 tribes numbering over 3,000 as shown in the margin.\* The Oraons have not apparently been given a separate place in the returns, but must be numerous, for in 1901 24,664 persons were returned as speaking Oraon.\* Some of these races, notably the Binjhāls and Gonds, have played

Binjhāl	...	39,225
Bhuiyā	...	9,073
Gond	...	63,248
Kawar	...	3,835
Khond	...	15,026
Kisān	...	14,268
Kol	...	9,680
Kurdā	...	11,192
Savarā	...	76,841
Khariā	...	5,029

an important part in the history of Sambalpur. In the internal struggles for the throne under Rānī Mohan Kumārī, the chief supporters of discontented pretenders were always Gond and Binjhāl zamindārs, who found their privileges threatened and their lands encroached on by Hindu favourites of the Rānī. Later, the Gonds of Bargarh rose against the Rājā, Nārāyan Singh, led by a Gond zamindār, who in 1821 had been ousted from his estate in favour of a Kūltā; and from 1857 to 1864 many of the rebel chiefs were Gonds and Binjhāls, who feared further losses under the British settlement. The aboriginal element is still strong among the old families holding under feudal tenures, and of the 16 zamindāri estates in the district, no less than twelve are held by Gonds and Binjhāls. A large number of the latter also are managers of villages; but, as a rule, they are not proprietors, but lessees holding under zamindārs in the more backward tracts.

The majority of the aboriginals now cultivate small patches of land in the wilder parts of the zamindāris, and are generally poor. Their holdings are, as a rule, insufficient to provide them with a full livelihood, and they eke out the cultivation of millets and sessamum by collecting forest produce. But with them poverty is a racial characteristic, and, as they will not work in times of hardship or save in times of plenty, their living cannot be otherwise than from hand to mouth. There seems little doubt that the power of the aboriginal owners of the soil is gradually being broken. "The aggression of the Hindu," writes Mr. Dewar, "is continuous and successful. The aboriginal, bought, mortgaged, and sometimes cheated, out of the land created by his forefathers,

\* The figures are those for the district as constituted at the census of 1901. Revised figures for the district as now constituted are not available.



is exported to Assam or moves to the still uncleared forests." The Mundā tribes in the east of the district have usually resisted Hindu proselytism, and still speak their own dialects and worship their own gods; but others have become, at least nominally, Hindu in religion, and now speak only Oriyā and Hindi.

As regards the distribution of the principal aboriginal tribes, the Binjhāls and Khonds inhabit chiefly the south-west of the district, the Gonds are prominent in the Bargarh plain, and the Mundā tribes, such as Kols, Kurās, Kisāns and Khariās, are confined to the east of the Mahānadi. The Binjhāls and Khonds have fallen off largely in numbers, chiefly because their country was severely affected by the famine of 1900. The Mundā tribes, on the other hand, have hitherto held their own, and their numbers have greatly increased. They are hard-working and fairly thrifty, and though regular drinkers of rice beer, do not often become drunkards. Kols, Mundās and Oraons hold in small plots almost all the land in villages closely adjoining Sambalpur, and their families provide the day labour used by contractors on roads and buildings. The Kurās are the tank diggers of the district, and their labour is in constant demand. They engage on piece work only, and being industrious and expert, they get good wages. The projector of a tank usually secures the services of a party of these people, who camp beside their work throughout the spring and hot weather, returning to their own villages for the rainy season. The Gond, who has shown himself able to exist apart from his tribe, has also survived Hindu competition well. In most villages a Gond fills the post of *jhāṅkar* or principal watchman—an honourable post, for the *jhāṅkar* is a subordinate village priest, and one of his duties is to propitiate the local earth god and thereby ensure good harvests.

The marginal statement shows the strength of the tribes

Caste.			Number.	Percentage of population.
Gāndā	...	...	104,661	13
Gaura	...	...	92,964	11
Kultā	...	...	87,689	11
Savarā	...	...	76,841	9
Gond	...	...	63,248	8
Binjhāl	...	...	39,225	5
Kewat	...	...	38,231	5
Teli	...	...	30,714	4
Brāhman	...	...	27,551	3

and castes numbering over 25,000 and their proportion to the total population. The figures given are those for the old district of Sambalpur, statistics for the district as now constituted not being available.

The following is a brief account of each of these tribes and castes.

The Gāndās\* are an aboriginal race known in other parts of Gāndās. Orissa as Pāns; some also in this district call themselves Pāns, as well as Dambās and Paīndās. They are a servile class of drudges, who weave coarse cloth and act as village watchmen, while in every village there are a few who are professional pipers and drummers, and are regularly employed as musicians at Hindu marriages. They are as a rule poor, for with their rough hand-loom and slow weaving they cannot compete with machine-made goods. Those who depend solely upon weaving for their livelihood can hardly earn enough for subsistence; they are not skilful cultivators; and it is difficult for them to find employment in other avocations on account of the caste prejudices of the Hindus; for the Cāndā is a helot whose touch defiles. It is probably owing, in part at least, to their poverty that they are professional thieves, responsible for a large proportion of the crime of the district. But their inherited character is not high, and their criminal propensities appear to be responsible for the fact that, by ancient custom, the subordinate village watchman is a Gāndā appointed on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, or with the idea that he will be a pledge for the good behaviour of other Gāndā thieves.

The Gāndās are regarded by Hindus as one of the very lowest castes. They are so degraded, that a twice-born Hindu considers it necessary to bathe if he is touched by one of them, and it is said that 50 years ago a Brāhman was defiled by a Gāndā casting his shadow over him. They are not allowed to draw water from the village tank, the village barber will not shave them, the village washerman will not wash their clothes. No orthodox Hindu rides a cart if a Gāndā happens to drive it, wears a garment if a Gāndā has stitched it, sits on a floor if a Gāndā has *hyed* it, i.e., plastered it with cow-dung, drinks wine if a Gāndā has distilled it, or purchases vegetables if a Gāndā sells them. A Gāndā in suffering receives no sympathy, and the door of Hindu charity is ordinarily closed against him. Until recently, moreover, no Gāndā child was allowed to join the village school, and though they are now allowed to attend it, they must sit apart from other Hindu boys. They cannot enter a Hindu temple, or take part in Hindu religious ceremonies, and they are not allowed to build their houses in the *ābādī* with other Hindus, or be employed as household servants in Hindu families.

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\* This account of the Gāndās has been compiled from a monograph prepared for the ethnographic survey of the Central Provinces by Mulla Mian Bhai Abdul Husain, formerly Subdivisional Officer of Bargarb.

However, in towns and large places they find employment as labourers with non-Hindus or unorthodox Hindus.

There are four subdivisions of Gāndās known as Oriyā, Lariā, Kandhriā and Kabhriā. Three of these appear to be territorial subdivisions, for the Oriyā Gāndās are those who live in the Oriyā country and speak Oriyā, the Lariā those who reside in the Lariā country, *i.e.*, Chhattisgarh, and speak Lariā or Chhattisgarhī, and the Kandhriās are so called because they live in the Kandh (Khond) country. Kabhriās are Kūbīrpanthis or followers of Kūbīr, but they and the Kandhriās are sparingly represented in this district. The Oriyās and Lariās intermarry, and will drink, eat and smoke together, but not with the Kandhriās or Kabhriās. Unlike the Kabhriās, who do not eat meat or fish, the ordinary Gāndās eat beef, pork, fowls, fish, rats, and cloven-footed animals, but refrain from eating monkeys, crocodiles, snakes, lizards and the leavings of other people. There is a tendency for the Oriyā Gāndās to give up the practice of eating beef. They do not kill a cow openly, for, if they do so, they are excommunicated; but they may eat beef if a cow dies or has been killed. The Lariā Gāndās will neither butcher a cow openly nor eat its flesh, but the Kandhriās can do both. A certain number of Gāndās have become Christians, and non-Christian Gāndās will eat and intermarry with them. As a matter of fact, however, intercourse between the Christian and Hindu Gāndās is checked by the fact that the former regard themselves as having a higher status, and also because there is an idea among the latter that the Christian Gāndās are unholy because they do not observe *dina*, *i.e.*, the anniversary *srādhā*.

The Gāndās will admit into their castes outsiders belonging to higher castes, but no one belonging to the castes which they regard as lower than themselves, *viz.*, Chamār, Ghāsiā, Hāri, Māngan and Mehtar. The Gāndā is, indeed, polluted by the touch of any of these latter and has to take a purifying bath; while if he is beaten by one of them or eats from the hands of one of them or of a Kāyasth, he is temporarily outcasted. The same penalty attaches to any one whose cow dies while tied up, or who works as a *saīs*. In order to obtain readmission into the caste, he has to undergo a curious form of *prāyaschitta*. A Gāndā of the Chhurā *gotra* or barber class shaves the man, and some water with a little gold is put into an earthen pot; the offending Gāndā bathes himself with this water and gives a feast to the caste, all this being done under a *mahuā* tree. When a cow dies with a rope on its neck, there is an extra penalty, for the owner must go on pilgrimage either to Puri or to Narsinghnāth in the Borāsāmbār zamindāri.

The religion of the Gāndās presents no special features. They worship all the Hindu gods and especially revere Mahālakshmi, because, it is said, they care more for money than for moral virtues. For practical purposes they are most interested in averting the evil eye and exorcising evil spirits. Their priests are men of their own caste, called Birtīās, who live in the Gāndāparā or Gāndā settlement, but try to assert that they are not Gāndās and marry among themselves.

Girls are married generally between the age of 5 and 12 years, and if a girl is unmarried when she attains puberty, she is married to a bow or an arrow tied to a post made of *mahuā* wood. The ordinary marriage ceremony presents some curious features. The bride walks seven times round the bridegroom, and at the end of each round presses two cakes against his cheeks, after which each cake is thrown away. After rice has been put on both their foreheads, they mount on the hips of two persons attending the marriage, if they are grown up, but if young, on their shoulders; and then their bearers dance. Divorce is allowed in case of incompatibility of temper, or if the wife is unfaithful, has been convicted of theft, or is barren. The divorce is symbolized by the woman breaking her glass bangles in the presence of her husband and his fellow castemen. Formerly there used to be a headman, called *selhiā*, who was practically the owner of divorced wives, selling them to others and pocketing the proceeds. The divorced wives remained with their parents or guardians, but the *selhiā*'s consent to remarriage was necessary and fees were invariably paid to him.

The dead are generally buried, but rich Gāndās indulge in the luxury of cremation. The body is placed on its back with the head to the north and may not be exhumed, but the bones may be taken out of the grave to be thrown into the Ganges. The man who takes the bones is temporarily outcasted, but on his return he gives a feast and is then readmitted into the caste.

The Pankās were originally a subcaste of Gāndās, but are Pankās, now practically a separate caste. They are Gāndās who have adopted Kabirpanthism, and have thereby obtained a slight rise in status. The legend of their origin is that on one occasion Sankarāchārya and his disciples were wandering in the forests of Sambalpur, when they came to the hut of a Gāndā. Being thirsty, Sankarāchārya asked the Gāndā for water and drank it. His disciples seeing that he had taken water from a Gāndā, without regard to his caste, also did so. Sankarāchārya said nothing, but proceeded on his way. Presently he came to the shop of a brazier who had some molten metal in a mould.

Sankarāchārya drank the burning metal and told his disciples to do the same. They said they could not, whereupon the master said to them—"I can take water from a Gāndā without pollution, but you cannot." After this his disciples were degraded to the Gāndā caste, and from them are descended the Pankās.

Gauras.

The Gauras\* or Gahrās (also called Rāwats) are the herdsmen of the district, corresponding to the Goālās elsewhere. Their numerical strength may be accounted for by the fact that they were attracted, and induced to settle down, by the extensive grazing grounds which formerly existed. They are still chiefly graziers, or household servants, and account for a large proportion of the small cultivators. Except in the more jungly tracts, few hold villages, and, though many are well-do-to, most of them are ordinary cultivators with good stocks, small holdings and small debts. A number are farm servants or field labourers, and each village has a Gaura servant, known as the *nariha*, who is responsible for the village herd and for supplying water to officials and strangers halting at the village. Their connection with the cow and their duties as water-bearers give them a fair social position, but they are neither enterprising nor very industrious. As milkmen they are notorious for adulterating milk and have no reputation for honesty. Indeed a popular proverb is:—*Patarkatā, Tantarkatā, Paniotā, Gaurinī mai, E chari jati ku bisuās nai*, i.e., Do not trust a palm-leaf writer (*Mahānti*), a weaver, a distiller or a Gaura woman.

There are several subdivisions of Gauras, some of which are territorial, such as Magadha, or those from the country of Magadha, and Jharuā, i.e., those who used to live in the *jhar* or jungles. The Nandas are named after Krishna's adoptive father, who was a cowherd; and other subdivisions are Sola Khandia, Jachak, Abab and Kandā. The Magadha subdivision is the most numerous of all, absorbing almost three-fourths of the total number of Gauras. They have 120 *burgas* or exogamous divisions, most of which may have been originally totemistic, though totemistic practices seem to have disappeared. They allow widow marriage, which is effected by the husband giving new bangles to the widow, and a girl who has passed the age of puberty is married in the same manner. If a widow is married to a bachelor, the latter has first to be married to a flower. The Gauras worship Samlāi and Chandi Devī, and pay special reverence to the cow.

\* This account of the Gauras has been prepared with the help of a note kindly contributed by Mr. Hirā Lāl, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Superintendent of Gazetteer, Central Provinces.

The Kultās,\* also called Koltās or Kolitās, are the chief Kultās. cultivating caste of Sambalpur. They say that they immigrated from the Baud State, which they regard as their ancestral home, and that a member of their caste formerly held the position of Diwān of the State. According to one of their legends, their ancestors were employed as water-bearers in the royal household of Rāma, and having accompanied him in his exile, were permitted to settle in the Oriyā country at the request of the Raghu-nāthiā Brāhmans, who wanted cultivators to till the soil. Another legend is that Rāma, when wandering in the forests of Sambalpur, met three brothers and asked them to draw water for him. The first brought water in a clean brass pot and was called Sudh (well-mannered). The second made a cup of leaves and drew water from a well with a rope; he was called Dumāl from *dori-māl*, a coil of rope. The third brought water only in a hollow gourd and was named Kultā from *ku-rīta*, ill-mannered. This story serves to shew that the Kultās, Sudhs and Dumāls acknowledge some connection, and in the Sambalpur district they will take food together at festivals. Another similar legend is that when Rāma was wandering in the forests, he felt thirsty, and seeing a Kol carrying water in a gourd, asked him to give it to him. Being conscious of his low position, the Kol was reluctant to do so. Thereupon Rāma told the Kol to pour the water in a hole on a stone, and then drank it. It so happened that his wife Sitā threw away a half-eaten fruit, which turned into a girl; and this girl Rāma bestowed on the Kol as a mark of his gratitude for giving him the water. Their issue was therefore called Kolitha from Kol and *litha* (half-eaten).

These legends would appear to indicate an aboriginal descent or an admixture of Aryan and non-Aryan blood. Another plausible theory of their origin is that they are an offshoot of the Chasā caste, the principal cultivating caste of Orissa; for several of their family names are identical with those of the Chasās, and there is a subcaste of the latter called Kultā Chasās. It has also been conjectured that the Kultās may be those Chasās who took to growing *kultha*, a favourite pulse in Sambalpur.

The caste worship the goddess Rāmchandī, who is regarded as the personification of Mother Earth, on whose bounty they live. She is represented by a handful of earth brought from her

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\* This account of the Kultās has been compiled mainly from an article prepared for the ethnographic survey of the Central Provinces (based on a paper contributed by Mr. Darmānand Tewāri, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Settlement Officer, Sambalpur) and from a note contributed by Mr. Hirā Lāl, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Superintendent of Gazetteer, Central Provinces.

shrine at Sarsarā in the Baud State. They worship the plough in the month of Srāban, and a festival called Puājiuntia is observed in the month of Kunwār, at which barren women try to ascertain whether they will get a son. A hole is made in the ground and filled with water, and a fish is placed in it. The woman sits by the hole holding her cloth spread out, and if the fish in struggling jumps into her cloth, it is held to prognosticate the birth of a son. This ceremony, however, is said to be performed by other castes, and not peculiar to the Kultās. The Kultās employ Brāhmanas for religious ceremonies and have Vaishnavas or Bairāgis as their *gurus*; no boy is married till he has a *guru*. Brāhmanas will take water from Kultās, and their social status is equal to that of good agricultural castes.

Kultā girls must be married before puberty; otherwise the parents have to make an expiatory offering to the Brāhmanas. If the parents are too poor to celebrate the marriage at the proper time, their fellow castemen raise a subscription for them. The Kultā marriages present several peculiar features. For instance, if the eldest boy or girl is married, the parents have to undergo a ceremony of re-marriage, which is called *sup-bibāha*. Possibly this is an expedient to ward off any insinuations as to the illegitimacy of their first child, or it may be a relic of a time when the couple began to live together informally, the ceremony being performed subsequently in order to legitimize their offspring. A figure is made with rice of a monkey or deer, at which the bridegroom shoots an arrow. It is then cooked and eaten. This may symbolize the chase and be a reminiscence of their former life in the jungle. Again, the drummers of the bride and bridegroom's party have a free fight, when the latter arrive at the former's village. If the bridegroom's party wins, all is well; but should they be defeated, the bride's father is fined. This may perhaps be a relic of marriage by capture. The Kultās allow widow marriage, but the widow price is high, the widow's suitor having to pay not less than Rs. 100. A bachelor, as a rule, does not marry a widow; but if he does, he has first to perform a mock marriage with a flower. This saves him from becoming a devil after his death.

The Kultās are good cultivators, strongly appreciate the advantage of irrigation, and show considerable public spirit, or, it may be canniness, in constructing tanks which will benefit the lands of their tenants as well as their own. The Kultās' boast is that, given water, he will grow good crops on even the poorest soil, but he will have nothing to do with land so flat as

to give no surface drainage. They are the best cultivators in the district, frugal and hard-working, and few of them are poor. They hold as *gamtis* more villages than any other one caste in the district, and Kultā tenants are usually well-to-do, having large holdings, good stock, and ample savings. Many men of this class have so profited of late years by the rise in the price of rice as to be able to buy up villages from less thrifty and industrious aboriginals. Of late years too the richer Kultās have aped Brāhman customs, even to the extent of setting up for themselves a new caste rule forbidding them to touch the plough. As a class, their most prominent characteristics are frugality, industry, hunger for land, and readiness to resort to litigation rather than relinquish a supposed right to it. These characteristics may perhaps account for two uncomplimentary proverbs about them. The first is:—*Kuliya Kultā, nishthur Teli, Bāman sānge bāt na chāli*, i.e., a Kultā is black at heart; a Teli is cruel; a Brāhman is a dangerous companion on a journey. The second is:—*Kultā ahankārī, Bāman bhikkārī*, i.e., the Kultā is proud and the Brāhman a beggar.

The Savarās\* are a caste of aboriginal descent, who have been identified with the Suari of Pliny and the Sabarai of Ptolemy. They occupy a degraded position among the servile castes, and, like the Pāns and other very low castes, are excluded from the Jagannāth temple at Puri. They themselves say that they were originally a wandering tribe roaming through the hills of Orissa and living on the products of the forest, but in Sambalpur they now live principally in the open country and have adopted Hindu usages. They are subdivided into two sub-castes called Oriyā and Lariā, i.e., residents of Orissa and the Lariā (Chhattisgarh) country. The Savarās claim also a third subdivision known as Kalāpithiā, i.e., "black-backs," chiefly found in Puri, where they pull Jagannāth's car at the great car festival. The Kalāpithiās abstain from eating fowls and other food considered impure by orthodox Hindus, and are regarded as the highest class of Savarās.

There are also two curious divisions which appear to have been formed without reference to social intercourse or marriage. They are Joriā and Khuntiā, and the distinction between them is that the former bury or burn their dead near a *jor* or small stream, while the latter do so near a *khunt*, i.e., an old tree on high ground. These subdivisions intermarry and eat together, and

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\* This caste was returned as Savarās in the Central Provinces Census of 1901, but it is reported that they are known locally as Sabarās. In Bengal the Savarās and Saharās were treated as separate castes at the census of 1901.



differ only in having some peculiar practices characteristic of each. For instance, the Joriās consider it a great sin to marry a girl after she has attained puberty, while the Khuntiās see nothing wrong in exceeding the age of puberty. The Joriās have therefore adopted the custom of marrying a girl to an arrow, if she cannot be disposed of before she attains maturity. If through some mischance she has attained maturity before being married to an arrow, she is tied to a tree in a jungle, which is a summary process of marrying her to that tree. She is finally given away as a widow to any member of the caste who will take her. Sometimes, however, such a girl is married, as an alternative, to an old man, and is then disposed of as a widow, the old man's claim to her as his wife not being recognized.

The chief deity of the Savarās is Mahālakshmi. They do not employ Brāhmans for religious or ceremonial purposes, but every one of them is said to have a Vaishnava or Bairāgi as a *guru*. They are chiefly agriculturists and field labourers.\* Perhaps half of them have small holdings of their own, and the others are labourers, many of whom are allowed by their masters to cultivate small plots in lieu of part of their wages. They are bad cultivators, and in the zamindāris, where some of them eke out their livelihood by collecting jungle products, they continue to follow the primitive form of cultivation called *dahi*. They are described as being stupid, honest and hard-working, and as making the best of the farm-hands. The women, less stupid and even more hard-working,\* do most of the rice-husking and of the huckstering at the village markets. In most villages one of them is the *jhānkar* or priest of the village deity, a post for which the Savarā is believed to have special qualifications. He is considered the best of sorcerers, and is therefore regarded as a dangerous person. These gifts find expression in two popular proverbs:—(1) *Savarā ki puje, Rāwat ki bāndhi, i.e.,* Who can escape if a Savarā bewitches? What cattle can run away if a Rāwat ties it up? (2) *Savarā biṛ gobrā, i.e.,* The Savarā is verily a cup of poison.\*

Gonds.

The Gonds† are a branch of the well known tribe in the Central Provinces. In this district the Gond families are old ones, and their numbers seem to indicate that previous to the Oriyā immigration, they held possession of the country, subduing

\* This account of the Savarās has been compiled mainly from a note contributed by Mr. Hira Lal, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Superintendent of Gazetteer, Central Provinces.

† This account of the Gonds has been compiled mainly from an article on the tribe prepared for the revised edition of the Imperial Gazetteer.

the Mundā tribes, who were probably there before them. They are of small stature and dark in colour. Their bodies are well proportioned, but their features are ugly, with a round head, distended nostrils, a wide mouth and thick lips, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustache. Their long hair is fastened in a knot behind, and is generally the only covering to the head. They are fond of hunting and pursue game with the eagerness and ardour of people of the forest. When employed in the chase they hang their arrows by the barb to their hair, with the point upwards and the feathered hilts hanging between their shoulders. When game is found, the bow is raised till the arrow points high into the air, and is then brought down to bear on its object, with an unerring aim at short distances. The Gonds are now, however, principally engaged in agriculture, and the bulk of them are farm servants and field labourers, but they include some of the leading zamīndārs and many of the *gaontīās*. They work well, but are improvident and lazy when they have got enough for their immediate wants. This trait has given rise to a proverb—"A Gond considers himself a king, if he has a pot of grain in his house."

There are two main divisions, the Rāj Gonds, who form the aristocracy, and the Dhur or dust Gonds, who are the plebeians. The Rāj Gonds may be taken to be the descendants of Gond landed proprietors, who have been formed into a separate subdivision and admitted to Hinduism with the status of a cultivating caste, Brāhmans taking water from them. Many Rāj Gonds wear the sacred thread and outdo Brāhmans in their purificatory observances, even having the wood which is to cook their food washed before it is burnt. But many of them are obliged once in four or five years to visit their god Bura Deo, and to place cow's flesh to their lips wrapped in a cloth, lest evil should befall their house. The religion of the Gond is simply animistic. The deified ancestors are represented by small pebbles kept in a basket in the holiest part of the house, *i.e.*, the kitchen, where he regularly worships them at appointed intervals. His greatest god is Bura Deo, but his pantheon includes many others, some being Hindu gods and other animals or implements to which Hindu names have been attached.

The funeral ceremonies of the Gonds are interesting. The corpses are usually buried with their feet to the south; but the higher classes burn their dead. On the fifth day after death they perform the ceremony of bringing back the soul. The relations go to the river side and call aloud the name of the dead person. They then enter the river, catch a fish or an insect

and taking it home, place it among the sainted dead of the family, believing that the spirit of the dead person has in this manner been brought back to the house. In some cases it is eaten, in the belief that it will thus be born again as a child. The good souls are quickly appeased, and their veneration is confined to their descendants. But the bad ones excite a wilder interest because their evil influences may be extended to others. A similar fear attaches to the spirits of persons who have died a violent or unnatural death.

*Binjhāls.* The Binjhāls\* or Binjhwārs are a race of aboriginal descent, who appear to have been among the earliest inhabitants of the district. Their traditions associate them with the Vindhya hills, and their former home is believed to have been Ratanpur in Chhattisgarh, whence they moved eastward in the direction of Borāsāmbār. A trace of their former domination is to be found in the legend of the origin of the Mahārājās of Pātnā given in the previous chapter, and in the fact that the Binjhāl zamindār of Borāsāmbār still affixes the *likā* to the Mahārājā of Pātnā on his accession. The more advanced Binjhāls, especially the land-owners, boast of an alliance with Rājputs, and call themselves Barhiās, a title originally borne by small hill chiefs; but the simpler and more ignorant Binjhāls do not claim an Aryan descent.

The great majority are cultivators, and the rest are generally farm servants or field labourers. They are not such good cultivators as the Kullās and Aghariās, but are not inferior to the Gonds, and are advanced as compared with other Dravidian races. Those who have settled in the plains have taken to improved methods of rice cultivation; and in the hills and jungle tracts they have the reputation of being skilful *\*dahi* cultivators, *i.e.*, reclaimers of jungle, and of being the hardiest of the forest races. Here they are often proprietors or managers of villages, and the majority are independent cultivators; but in the plains they are mostly farm servants, field labourers, graziers or *jhānkars*. The *jhānkars* act as assistants of the village watchmen and as priests of the village deity. The latter is represented by a stone or tree and is worshipped on festival days by the *jhānkār*, who gets a large share of the offerings, such as goats, fowls, fruit, etc. Their oldest traditions represent them as a race of archers, and in the jungle tracts they still retain their skill with the bow. They have few scruples about

\* This account of the Binjhāls has been compiled from a monograph prepared for the ethnographic survey of the Central Provinces by Mulla Mian Bhai Abdul Husain, formerly Subdivisional Officer of Bārgarh.

food, eating pork, fowls, fish, tortoise, snakes, rats and leopards, but they do not eat monkeys, beef, crocodiles, lizards and jackals. The staple food of the poor consists of roots and the flowers of the *mahuā* tree, and they eat rice only on special occasions and on festivals. Cultivators, however, eat rice in the form of *pakhāl*. They are very fond of smoking, but will never use the *hukkā*, but only the *kāhālī*, i.e., a cheroot made of country tobacco enclosed in leaves, one of which may generally be seen in the ear or waist of every male Binjhāl.

The Binjhāls worship all the Hindu deities, but traces of a more primitive belief may be seen in their worship of arrows, swords and spears. The following appear to be purely Binjhāl deities. Bindubāshinī is an idol in the shape of a girl carved in stone, which is enshrined in a temple on the hill near Narsingh-nāth. It is said that twelve Binjhāl archers, who first settled in Borāsāmbār, brought this image from Bindhyāchal, i.e., the Vindhya hills. There is a Binjhāl priest, and Binjhāls from adjacent villages visit the temple throughout the year, and offer goats, fowls, coconuts, etc. Once every three years, in the month of Phālgun, the worshippers take out the idol, and with great pomp carry it in procession round the principal Binjhāl villages, all the Binjhāl men and women, boys and girls escorting it from one village to another, dancing, singing and playing music on the way. They also present offerings to it in each village. Lakshmeswarī, the goddess of archery, is enshrined in a thatched temple in *manzā* Khairā in the Borāsāmbār zamindāri. Here six or seven three-headed spears of different size are placed, and these are worshipped by a Binjhāl, to whom the rent of 3 villages is assigned for the purpose. Dūngor Devatā is the mountain deity, and is worshipped by every Binjhāl, without exception, on Dasaharā and Chaitpuni days. This deity is represented simply by a big stone placed anywhere over a hillock or on high ground under a tree.

The Binjhāls do not employ Brāhmins in any ceremony, but almost every Binjhāl takes *karna-maṅṭras*, i.e., *mantras* whispered in the ear (*karna*), from a *Bairāgi* or *Vaishnava*, e.g., *mantras* to be repeated in the morning at sun-rise, at the time of washing the teeth, at the time of making water, and at the time of easing. They believe firmly in ghosts or rather the spirits of the dead, for the soul of any wicked person may after death become a malevolent spirit. Their superstitious dread of spirits is phenomenal, and when any disease becomes chronic or any person is childless, they attribute it to the evil influence of one of them. On such occasions they call in a Binjhāl *guniā* or

exorcist to drive it out of the possessed person. In character, the Binjhāls of the hills are described as being straightforward and truthful, but their ideas of sin are very limited, the chief commandments of their moral code being—(a) Thou shalt not commit adultery with any one outside the caste, (b) thou shalt not steal, (c) thou shalt not give false evidence, (d) thou shalt not kill a human being, and (e) thou shalt not eat beef.

They constitute a strictly conservative caste, not admitting outsiders under any circumstances, and being extremely strict regarding any *liaison* between Binjhāl women and men of higher castes. They will not take food even from the highest Brāhman, and this caste scruple was a great difficulty in the administration of relief in the famine of 1900, being removed only by engaging Binjhāl cooks.

Generally speaking, marriage takes place when the girl attains maturity, or even two or three years after menstruation commences. The marriageable age for girls varies from 16 to 20, and for the boys from 18 to 22 years. Special facilities are given to young girls on festival days to mix with the other sex, and they are allowed to make their own selection; it is seldom that a girl of marriageable age remains unbetrothed or unmarried. Child marriage was originally unknown, and is still so amongst Binjhāls in the remote hilly tracts, but has been adopted in imitation of high caste Hindus by a few families of *gaontīās*, Barhiās and land-owners. The latter have also resorted to the custom of marrying to arrows those girls for whom husbands cannot be found. In case the first wife is without children, a second wife is taken without hesitation, even by a common Binjhāl of ordinary means, while if the husband is a man of some means, and his first wife is unable to carry on household business unaided, a second, third or even fourth wife is taken. A zamīndār marries a new wife (called a *pātrānī*) on the day he gets his powers over the zamīndārī, simply to commemorate the occasion, although he may have half a dozen wives already.

The marriage day is fixed by a curious method of divination. The bridegroom's father calls for the *gaint* or astrologer of the village, an elderly Binjhāl, on any auspicious day of the week except Saturday and Tuesday. At sunrise the astrologer places a bronze plate full of water in front of the bridegroom's house, and in this he puts two grains of rice and *urad*. If they sink, the sign is inauspicious, but this is avoided by selecting old light grains. Then a few grains of rice and *urad* are separately dropped into the water, and these are supposed to represent the boy and girl. If the grains come together, it is auspicious; if

they separate, it forebodes evil. The experiment is repeated thrice, and if the grains unite as many times, it means that the married life will be happy. If inauspicious signs appear, the betrothal ceremony is often postponed.

Widow marriage and divorce are allowed, and both the widows and divorced wives are as free to marry again as if they were maidens. A widow is expected to marry the younger brother of the deceased husband, the elder brother being regarded in the light of a father-in-law. She is not compelled to marry the younger brother, but she is often induced to do so, if the deceased has left any real property and no male issue; for a son by such a second marriage succeeds to the property left by the first husband. If, however, she does not consent, she is at liberty to marry some other person.

The dead are usually buried, but persons of advanced age and rich persons are generally burnt. The body is anointed with *haldi* (turmeric) and washed; new clothes are put on it, and then it is buried in a grave which is not less than three feet deep. Before burial, it is taken round the grave seven times. It is placed with the head towards the north, females being laid on the back with their face towards the sky, and males with the face downwards. If the body is burnt, the ashes and bones are generally taken to Pāñch Pandāh Dhār in the stream near Narsinghnāth, and in some cases by rich land-owners to the Ganges. On the night of the ninth day after burial, the castemen go to the house of the deceased, cook food for the family, and take some of the mourners outside the village, where they clear a piece of ground under a tree. In the centre of this they put uncooked rice, with a lamp over it and cooked rice on either side. Then they watch for an insect or fly to come up to the lamp. The insect is carefully captured on a cake of uncooked flour, brought to the house of the deceased, and kept there till next morning. Next day the son of the deceased or, in default of a son, the nearest agnate relative shaves his moustaches, and the other mourners get themselves shaved. The insect is now taken to a stream, where they worship it, putting some grains of rice over it. They then throw it in the stream or thrust it inside the sand by a tuft of grass, and having done so, bathe and return to the deceased's house and feast there. This ceremony, which is known as *kharpāni*, is not performed for children under two years of age.

The Kewats are boatmen and fishermen. They do not, as a Kewats. rule, fish in tanks, but only in the rivers and chiefly in the Mahānadi. They supply the town of Sambalpur and the riverside villages with fish, and also work all the ferries, the most

important of which is the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway ferry at Sambalpur. Some of this caste hold river side villages, but they are not the best of cultivators, and now that the railway has cut out the river as a trade route, the Kewats are losing their land. Kewat women often do business as confectioners of a kind, preparing the fried or popped rice which is used as a subsidiary meal. It is bought and eaten by men on a journey who have no time to cook food, and it is regularly given to children as an extra morning meal in the hot weather to prevent them courting some ailment by drinking water on an empty stomach.

**Telis.** The Telis are the oilmen of the country, but a great number have now taken to cultivation. Many Telis still are oil-pressers, who buy up sesamum and combine their caste trade with rice cultivation. The Haldiā Telis, who formerly worked in turmeric, have less to do with their original trade. Both classes are usually prosperous, and many hold rich villages.

**Brāhmans.** Numerically the Brāhmans\* form a small part of the population, but their education, social status and wealth combine with the strong religious sentiment of the district to give them importance. They are the most numerous village proprietors, next to Gonds, Binjhāls and Rājputs, who being zamīndārs happen to hold a larger number of villages; and they are also substantial *mālguzārs*. They are subdivided into Utkal or Oriyā; Jharuā or Aranyak; Raghunāthiā, Bhīmgiṛiā or Pāñch Sāsani; Hālūā, Aluā, Sāruā and Susāri. The Utkals, who are mostly concentrated in the town of Sambalpur, are believed to be immigrants from Utkal or Orissa and are considered the purest. The Jharuās or Aranyaks, both of which terms mean men of the forest, claim to be earlier immigrants from Orissa, and account for their name by the fact that they were the first to clear the forests in Sambalpur and settle there. The Utkals look upon them as pseudo-Brāhmans created from men of the jungle (*jhar*), who became cooks and were adopted as sons by Rājās. Now there is a separate subdivision, apparently an offshoot of Jharuās, called Susāri, a term meaning a cook or superintendent of stores and provisions. The Raghunāthiās, who are among the lowest of the Brāhmans, are more avowedly converts from local tribes, who claim to have been raised to the status of Brāhmans by Raghunāth or Rāmchandra during his wanderings in the Dandakāranya forest. The Raghunāthiās are also called Bhīmgiṛiās or Pāñch Sāsani, and their explanation of these names is that Rājā Raghunāth

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\* This account of the Brāhmans of Sambalpur has been prepared from a note contributed by Mr. Hirā Lāl, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Superintendent of Gazetteer, Central Provinces.

Deva of Hindol bestowed on their ancestors a *sāsan*, or royal grant, of five villages close to the Bhīngiri mountain in the neighbourhood of Ganjām. The Aluās and Sāruās are occupational subdivisions, the former having taken to growing and selling *ālu* or potatoes and the latter *sāru* or arums. These two subdivisions intermarry, and are looked upon as inferior Brāhmans. They are chiefly met with in the Barpālī zamindāri, where also Haluās are found in comparatively large numbers. The Haluās derive their name from the plough (*hal*), which, unlike other Brāhmans, they will handle and use.

The Oriyā Brāhmans have eponymous *gotras*, but it is a remarkable fact that there are traces of a survival of totemistic beliefs so common among Dravidian and semi-Dravidian groups. Thus the Brāhmans of the Bharadwāja *gotra* worship a bird of that name, elsewhere known as *nīl-kanth* or blue jay; those of the Kanduha *gotra* claim descent from a tortoise (*kachchhap*) and not Kashyap Rishi; those of the Parāsara *gotra* revere a *pārā* or pigeon. It is difficult to account for these superstitions, but they may be a survival of ancient totemism; they may be due to the adoption by the immigrant Brāhmans of Dravidian beliefs and observances; or they may show that, if the Brāhmans were not originally Dravidians, they had an infusion of Dravidian blood—a theory which is supported by the reasons assigned for the formation of the various endogamous groups.

The two most numerous subdivisions are the Jharuā and Utkal. Members of the former are looked down upon by the Utkal Brāhmans, who, being later immigrants, adhere more closely to Brahmanical rules; and there is no love lost between the two classes. The Utkals are less numerous than the Jharuās, but under native rule many of their families obtained great influence and acquired considerable grants of land. They have multiplied considerably and have subdivided their holdings without adding to them. Many have now no land and live on charity or by temple service. The pioneer Jharuās, on the other hand, are again rising in influence. They are careful cultivators, add to their estates, and, moving with the times, have engaged in mercantile pursuits and money-lending. A third class, called Lariā Brāhmans, are still later immigrants, who have come from Chhattisgarh and settled in the north of the district. Their numbers are small, but they hold several good villages and are usually enterprising and prosperous.

The Brāhmans of this district are generally well-to-do cultivators, and several of them are substantial *mālguzārs*. They also follow their traditional occupation of priests, officiating at



various Hindu ceremonies; and several of them are Government servants, but very few go out of the district to serve in that capacity. The Land Records staff of the district and the ministerial staff of the offices are almost entirely manned by members of the less wealthy Brāhman families. As a class, the Brāhmans usually make good village managers, and as tenants form a prosperous section of the community. But when a Brāhman cultivator is poor, he is very poor; for he is much handicapped by his caste, and more especially by the rule which forbids him to touch a plough and forces him to employ paid labour.

SOCIAL  
LIFE.  
The  
village  
communi-  
ty.

A typical Sambalpur village, picturesquely screened by palm, mango and fig trees, and surrounded by tanks of deep water, has an air of comfort about it which is rarely met with in the adjoining country. The houses have small vegetable gardens attached to them, and they are encircled by a wide expanse of rice fields under close tillage. Near the village will be found a spacious mango grove, in the shade of which a bazar may be held; and here and there throughout the cultivated area are tanks used for irrigation, from the banks of which there rise clumps of palm trees. On the skirts of the village or in well-irrigated patches of land further afield are plots of sugarcane, in which some work is always in progress—channels cut, new ground taken in, new wells dug, levels made more accurate, etc. Close by is the *bāndh*, a reservoir from which the village obtains its drinking water, and this is invariably consecrated or married to a god.

In the village itself the eye is struck by the neatness of the houses in small compounds enclosed by bamboo fences. They have mud walls and verandahs, are generally thatched with straw, and are approached by flights of steps leading from the lanes. Each village has a strangers' rest-house or *derāghar* erected and maintained by the villagers, which serves as a rest-house for postmen, policemen and travellers, as a place of detention for offenders till the police are called, as the headquarters of the *chaukidār* by night, and as a common meeting-place by day. Another centre for the village gossips is the *pattābādī*, generally a platform below a tree, where the people meet in the afternoon or evening. Here they talk for an hour or two before they go to their fields in the afternoon, and here again they meet in the evening to discuss the village affairs. The principal temples are sacred to Mahādeva or Jagannāth, and in the centre of the tank containing the village drinking water will be seen a small column with a pigeon-hole or two, which is sacred to the village deity. In some unused lane may be espied the Jagannāth

car, which is kept there from one *Rath Jātrā* till another, when it is overhauled by the carpenter and decorated by the pious peasants. Most villages too contain a *bhāgabātḡadī*, a small open shed in which the *bhāgabāt* is recited. This is invariably done during epidemics of cholera and smallpox, when the villagers assemble in three or four parties, light fires, and sing the *bhāgabāt* round them.

A few isolated houses at some distance from the village mark the *Gāndāparā* or settlement of the unclean *Gāndās*. The *Gāndā* is ordinarily a weaver, but ekes out his living by petty thefts. Dead cattle are his perquisite, and he is also the village humourist and musician in great demand at marriages and dances. Special measures have to be taken to prevent the *Gāndās* making thieving expeditions. Until recently it was the practice to sound a drum at night and take their roll-call, so as to make sure that they were not out on such raids. They are, in fact, a thief caste, and this is most probably the reason why there are in each village two watchmen, one a man of higher caste, who performs many of the *kolwār's* duties, and the other a *Gāndā chāukīdār*, who is by way of being a pledge for the good behaviour of his fellow *Gāndās*.

In most villages there is a considerable aboriginal element, including the stolid Gond, the merry Kol and the light-hearted, light-fingered *Gāndā*; but Oriyās predominate. A distinguishing trait in the personal appearance of the Oriyās is the shiny look of the skin due to the use of oil, which is supposed to be a preventive against malaria. The women rub themselves with powdered turmeric, which gives the skin a lighter colour. The Oriyās are a cleanly people, bathing at least once every day and three or four times daily in the hot weather. When they bathe, they do so clothes and all, and return home with their dripping garments clinging to their bodies; the idea being that it is improper to put on a new cloth until they have bathed. They also believe that to eat before immersion in water renders them impure, and consequently the first bath is taken before the morning meal. Most of them shave the fore-part of the head up to the crown, but not the back of the head. Their clothes are scanty, the well-to-do wearing a *dhotī* and *chādar*, while the poorer classes are content with a *dhotī* only. The food of the former consist of rice, fish, vegetables and various pulses, but lately wheaten cakes have been added.

The ordinary Oriyā cultivator subsists on *bāsi* or *pakhāl*, a fluid mixture of boiled rice and water; the rice is pounded by hand so that it may dissolve in water, and the mixture is left

standing during the night and drunk cold in the morning. In the hot weather they drink water in which rice has been boiled, and not plain water. They will not drink well water, as it is considered useless for *pakhāl*; and though many wells have been dug for their benefit, they are as a rule not used for drinking purposes. Shoes are rarely worn, both because the soil is so sandy as to render their use unnecessary, and also because shoes are tabooed in the rice fields. Nearly every man carries a cheroot of tobacco rolled in a *sāl* leaf, which is tucked under his *dhoti* at his waist or at the back of his ear. One or two are certain to have a straw plait smouldering gently; and great is their delight if a visitor gives them a box of matches.

The acknowledged leader of the village community is the *gaontīā* or headman, who is generally a Kultā or Utkal Brāhman. He is proprietor only of his home-farm, but as this usually comprises the best land in the village and is held free of revenue in return for his services, the *gaontīā* is, in wealth and status, nearly the equal of a full village proprietor. The executive council is the *panch* consisting of some of the leading tenants, who attend to details of village management, such as the distribution of water from tanks. Their decisions command respect, and there are rarely any complaints of selfishness on their part.

The usual village servants are the *negi* or village accountant, *kunhār* or potter, *lohār* or blacksmith, *narihā* or herdsman and water-carrier, *bhandāri* or barber, and *dhobā* or washerman. They generally have service holdings, with the exception of the *negis*, the number of whose holdings is now small. The *negi*, it may be explained, was formerly a kind of general assistant to the *gaontīā*, but his place in the village has been taken by the *patwāri* since the Land Record staff was organized. The others are to be found in most of the larger and older villages. By ancient custom the *narihā* is the water-carrier who serves the camps of Government officers, while the *kunhār* provides pots for strangers, and receives as a perquisite any straw used in the camps of officials.

*Jhānkar.*

A noticeable feature of rural life in Sambalpur is that the *jhānkar* or village priest is a universal and recognized village servant of fairly high status. It is his office to sacrifice a fowl or goat, in case of illness or disaster, to the malignant deity which haunts the *bāndh*, lonely hill or wide-spreading tree. Under some such tree will be seen a small trident painted red, and probably close by a heap of past offerings now broken up and decayed. This is the shrine of the *jhānkar*, whose ancestors have from time immemorial been entrusted with the duty of keeping the village deity from molesting the village. Should the

depredations of a tiger call an officer to the village, the *jhānkar* will be found hovering near waiting to be interviewed; he must be told to do *pūjā* to the deity and promised a goat if the tiger is killed. When this has been done, the people will beat with pleasure, and a good beat is thus secured for the price of a goat.

The *jhānkar* is nearly always a member of one of the aboriginal tribes, and his business is to conduct the worship of the local deities of the soil, crops, forests and hills. He generally has a substantial holding, rent-free, containing some of the best land in the village. He gets a basket of grain from each tenant after threshing is over, and the heads of all the goats sacrificed to the village deity. It is said locally that the *jhānkar* is looked on as the descendant of the founder of the village, and as the representative of its old owners, who were ousted by the Hindus. He worships on their behalf the indigenous deities, with whom he naturally possesses a more intimate acquaintance than later immigrants. The gods of the latter cannot be relied on to exercise a sufficient control over the works of nature in the foreign land to which they have been imported, or to ensure that the earth will regularly bring forth its fruit in season.

Another peculiar feature of village life in Sambalpur is the institution of free labour, which is described by Mr. Dewar as follows. "The continued existence of the institution of free labour is due to the fact that profitable rice cultivation on a large scale is impossible, unless the grower can at the critical seasons of seed-time and harvest command a large supply of labour. One day's delay in sowing, due to lack of hands, may result in a week's delay, owing to unsuitable weather conditions, and that in turn may delay later operations and result in a partial or total loss of the crop if, as frequently happens, the later rain fails. For a large farm, such as is necessary to the status of a *gaontia*, many regular farm servants are kept, who, in the seven months of the year when rice is not in the ground, do the preparatory ploughing and manuring, and work in the cane-field. But to keep on yearly hire a sufficient number of men to sow promptly all the rice land would be to lose a very large part of the present profits, because most of these men would have to be paid a year's wages for a month's work. On the other hand, there are in the Sambalpur villages very few labourers who do not themselves hold land, and those who do cannot be tempted by high wages at the sowing season. At the last census the great majority of agricultural day-labourers were found to be women, and these cannot work the plough. The result of this *impasse* is the custom by which each ryot in a village provides a ploughman

and a yoke of oxen for two days at sowing time and a sickleman for two days at harvest time to help the *gaontia* with his farm. It has been the official habit to consider this custom objectionable. But it is in fact free labour, not forced labour, and corresponds with friendly customs which to this day are in vogue among farmers in England and Scotland."

Amuse-  
ments and  
festivals.

Dances are a favourite amusement, and one may frequently witness at night a *nāch* by the village party, the Rām Līlā or Krishna Līlā *nāch* being a great favourite. The orchestra as often as not includes the *gaontia* himself, who organizes the whole entertainment. Wherever Kols are found, the village is enlivened by their quaint but intricate circular dances, men and women arm in arm keeping good time throughout. Numerous festivals are observed in the year, of which a few may be mentioned here.

Before sowing commences, on *Akshaya tritīyā*, every tenant takes a little paddy-seed and milk, a new thong and rope, a new plough (if he can afford it), and puts on a new cloth. Then he yokes his oxen, puts three handfuls of rice in front of the yoke of the plough, and sprinkles some milk and vermilion. He gives a handful of the seed to each bullock, and facing east throws seven handfuls broadcast. Then he ploughs his land and returns home; on this day he eats no vegetables or turmeric. After the ceremony is performed, sowing may go on without interruption.

Before transplantation, a ceremony called *Kādo varishta* takes place on Srāban Amāwasyā, *i.e.*, the 15th day of the dark half of the month of Srāban (July-August). On this occasion a goat, or it may be two goats, purchased by the subscriptions of the villagers is offered to the village deity. Before it is killed, the goat is washed, and the *jhānkār* collects from every ryot a little rice and a little paddy or *lei*, *i.e.*, a mixture of flour or ground rice with water or milk. These humble offerings he takes to the shrine, where he makes three little heaps of them. The goat is then brought up, in order that it may eat some of the rice. If it refuses to do so, it is not slaughtered; but if it does, it is killed, and some of its blood is sprinkled on the rice. Until this ceremony has been performed, the villagers cannot transplant rice after taking their midday meal; if a man wants to do so, he must not eat in the middle of the day.

On Srāban Pūrṇimā, *i.e.*, the full moon day of Srāban, each man ties a *rākhi* (or band) round some rice stalks, and round the horns of his bullocks, his plough, his agricultural implements, and the furniture of the house. In Sonpur they make a heap of earth surrounded by 7 pegs, with a rope of straw wound round them. A post is erected, and every one tries to jump as

high as he can over the mound and the post. On this day all the boys walk about on stilts, the idea being that the crops will grow as high as the stilts. The latter are thrown into the river at the *Polā* festival, which takes place on *Amāwasyā* day in the month of *Bhādra*, i.e., on the 15th day of the dark half of the month. To celebrate the festival, the villagers make images of cows and horses, take seven pots, make seven kinds of cakes, and offer them to the gods. Afterwards, the village boys drag about models of horses and carts, and play with them.

The *Nuākhiā* festival is observed in the second fortnight of *Bhādra* (August-September) on a day fixed by the astrologers. Cakes are made and offered, and a little new rice, mixed with milk, is eaten. The *jhānkar* provides the rice, for he reserves one plot in which to sow early rice, so that it will be ripe by this time. The villagers go to *Samlāi's* temple, where they present a coconut, and also offer rice to *Devī*. The lowest castes worship their household gods and do not join in the village worship.

Among aboriginal castes, the boys and girls go out to the jungle on the evening of the 11th day of *Bhādra* and cut a branch of a *karma* or *sāl* tree, or fell a young sapling. This they set up in the village, where it is worshipped, the villagers drinking and dancing round it all night. They pour liquor over it, and make offerings of rice and sweetmeats; a fowl is also killed, and the blood offered to the branch. In the morning the branch is taken away in procession and thrown into the village tank or the nearest stream. Songs are sung, drums are beaten, and the young people dance vigorously while coming and going with the branch. This is called the *Karma* or *Keli Kadam* festival, the story being that the goddess *Karma-rāni* once appeared to a man and promised that she would be present whenever a branch of the *sāl* tree was broken. A special feature of the festival is a long song praying for rain.

In the bright fortnight of *Bhādra*, after the *Karma* dance is over, the *Binjhāls* have a festival called the *Suā* dance. Young girls go about from village to village singing and dancing, accompanied by drummers and *Gāndā* musicians. They are entertained in each village that they visit, and are lodged comfortably for the night. Next morning they dance for 5 or 6 hours, and then proceed to another village, dancing, singing and beating drums.

*Mahulgundi*, also called *Gundikhiā*, is a festival observed on the full moon day of the month of *Phālgun* (February-March). On this day the people eat, for the first time in the year, new gram, the fruit of the mango, and, among the lower classes, the flower of the *mahuā* (*mahul*) tree and *chār*, just as new rice is

eaten on the *Nuākhiā* day later in the year. They are eaten by the male members and children of the family sitting together with their faces towards the east. The same articles are also offered, with cakes and a special kind of sweetmeat, called *sakurpati*, to the family deity and the village deity. On this occasion the Gonds go to Gichimora, offer a mixture of fruits (*gundi*) to Bura Deō, dance and drink liquor. This is an offering of the first fruits of the year and takes place at the same time as the *Hohi*.

Another curious festival is that of a sub-caste of the Savarās, called Pātnār Savarā or Patauriā Savarā, who go about dancing and charming snakes. Every third year they meet at Bandha near Khamunda, 8 miles from Bargarh, and stay there a month. Anyone who has committed an offence during the last three years is fined, and the proceeds are spent on providing liquor for the assembled Savarās. The method of ordeal is to mix some cow-dung with boiling water, and the man who is on trial has to plunge his hand into it. If his hand is burnt, he is guilty; but usually the water is not boiling.

The *Rath Jātrā* festival takes place on the 2nd day of the light part of the month of Asārḥ (June-July). This is an important festival in this district, and is a copy of the festival as observed in Puri. In the town of Sambalpur, and in villages where there are temples of Jagannāth, or of Jagannāth, Balabhadra and Subhadrā, cars are prepared for the festival, and on the *Rath Jātrā* day the images of the deities are seated on them. The cars are then dragged to the extremity of the town or village with music and dancing, and are there turned towards the south. This, it is said, is done so that Bibhīshan, king of Lanka (Ceylon) may see the images, for when Rāmchandra, after killing Rāvana and installing his brother Bibhīshan as king of Lankā, returned to his own kingdom, he promised Bibhīshan that he would be granted a glimpse of his person on this one day in the year. The people wear new clothes and eat rich food, and altogether it is a day of general festivity. The peasants of villages, where there are no temples of Jagannāth and no cars, go to the nearest village where the festival is observed and join in it there. The cars are dragged back eight days afterwards, this festival being called the *Bahūda Rath Jātrā*.

The *Dasaharā* festival is observed in the month of Aswin (September-October), commencing on the first day of the light part of the month and continuing up to the 10th day. The goddess Durgā is worshipped, and goats, and rarely buffaloes, are sacrificed to her. On the eighth day women and girls who

have brothers worship Durgā, fasting the whole day and praying for the prosperity of their brothers. This day is called the *Bhāi-juntīā* day. On the tenth day, when the worship of Durgā concludes, people of the town go to the temple of Samlāi, and it is also customary to pay visits to elderly persons. In the zamīndāris the *gaontīās* and *thikādārs* pay to their respective zamīndārs a customary cess called *Dasaharā dekhā*, consisting of money, goats, *ghī*, etc.

Pus Pūrnimā, *i.e.*, the full moon day of the month of Pus (December-January), is a day of joy and cheerfulness among the cultivating classes, because the year's agricultural work is practically over. On this day field labourers employed for the year are discharged; grain advances made to cultivators are repayable; and Brāhmins put on a new sacred thread.



## CHAPTER IV.

## PUBLIC HEALTH.

**CLIMATE** SAMBALPUR has long had an unenviable reputation for unhealthiness. As early as 1766 we find it stated by Mr. Motte, in the first published account of the district, that the air was "very unwholesome owing to the great vicissitudes of heat and cold," that the inhabitants were subject to rheumatism, and that every man in his escort was affected by violent fevers.\* Subsequent accounts are not less unfavourable. Not to multiply instances, a description of the country in 1841 says categorically that "the climate of Sambalpur is very pestiferous; indeed, so great is its unhealthiness that it has proved the grave of almost every European officer who has been stationed there."† It cannot be said, however, that the mortuary returns bear out these statements, for the death-rate reported is lower than in most Bengal districts, averaging only 20·72 per mille in the four years 1901—04, while it was 24·04 per mille in 1906 and 24·55 in 1907. It appears, indeed, that the district has been maligned and that it does not compare unfavourably with other districts of Bengal.

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The system of reporting vital statistics is the same as that adopted in the Central Provinces, in which the district was till recently included, and is different from that prevailing in Bengal. In rural areas the duty of reporting births and deaths devolves on the headmen of villages and village watchmen. The village watchman is supplied with a printed book in which entries of births and deaths are made as they occur by the headman, or, if he cannot read or write, by a *patwāri* or schoolmaster. At prescribed intervals, usually once a week, the village watchman takes his book to the police post to which his village is attached, and the entries are copied out into his vital statistics register by the police *muharrir*, who initials each entry in the books. The register is checked by the Superintendent of Vaccination, and any mistakes or omissions are corrected. Copies of the totals entered in the register are forwarded monthly to the

\* Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sumbhulpoor, *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1799.

† Bengal and Agra Gazetteer (1841), Vol. II, p. 224.

Civil Surgeon's office at headquarters, where the district returns are made up. In municipal towns the duty of reporting births and deaths rests with the nearest male relative (above the age of 16 years) of the person born or deceased, and breach of this rule is punishable with fine, which may amount to Rs. 50. Reports are made to, and vital statistics maintained by, the police as in rural areas, and are checked by the municipal vaccinator.

According to the returns thus prepared, the highest birth-rate since 1891 has been 55·18 per mille in 1899 and the lowest 30·16 per mille in 1901. The highest death-rate recorded is 108·18 per mille in 1900, the abnormal mortality being due to a terrible epidemic of cholera, and to the weakness of the crowds of wanderers who came into the district, during the famine of that year, from the surrounding States and districts. The next year witnessed the lowest death-rate yet recorded in the district, viz., 19·56 per mille. A curious feature of the returns is the difference between the birth-rate and death-rate in the *khālsa* and zamindāris, as illustrated in the following statement showing the births and deaths per mille:—

Year.	Births.		Deaths.	
	<i>Khālsa</i> .	Zamindāris.	<i>Khālsa</i> .	Zamindāris.
1900      ...      ...	37·62	44·49	89·22	114·77
1901-04 (average)      ...	36·62	51·94	19·58	22·98

According to the returns submitted year by year, the greatest mortality is caused by fever, which in 1907 gave a death-rate of 9·97 per mille out of the total death-rate of 24·55 per mille. The following account of the types of fever prevalent has been contributed by Captain F. H. Watling, I.M.S., recently Civil Surgeon of Sambalpur:—"The majority of cases of fever in the district are of the well known malarial types, and are caused by benign tertian, malignant tertian, and, very rarely, quartan fever parasites. The graver forms, viz., those caused by the malignant tertian parasite, prevail during the latter half of the monsoon and still more after it, i.e., during September, October and November, and to a much less extent from December to the end of March. The period, April to July, is almost free from this type of fever. The milder forms, viz., those caused by the so-called benign tertian, occur throughout the year, but like the malignant types are most prevalent during and after the monsoon period, i.e., during the seven months from August to March.

PRINCIPAL  
DISEASES.  
Fever.

"As the result of these constantly prevailing malarial fevers, one would expect a very high spleen rate among children, but this is not the case here. The highest spleen rate I have seen among school children in the district was 11 per cent. at Balbaspur, a few miles from headquarters, and a notoriously insanitary place. I should say the average for the whole district is about 5 per cent.; these figures are for the period November to April (when the Civil Surgeon goes on tour). There is practically no sale of quinine in the district. As regards other complications, the liver is often affected, there being a varying amount of tenderness and hyperæmia. The other organs are unaffected. During the latter half of May and June a few cases of malarial fever of a hyperpyrexial type, with marked cerebral symptoms, occur. These cases are mostly fatal and are very like cases of heat-stroke.

"There is one fever of special interest, which occurs in the autumn (especially after an unusually hot dry summer) and is locally known as *motijhira*. It usually prevails in small epidemics, attacks either sex, and mostly young adults or older children. Its mode of onset, course and termination are exactly like typhoid fever; and the temperature follows a typical typhoid fever course. The points of difference are (1) absence of diarrhoea in almost every case; (2) the eruption appears from the fourth to eighth day (earlier than that of typhoid) on the chest, sides of neck and face, and then spreads over the rest of the body. It is popular and exactly resembles that of measles, except that it is more discrete and more distinct to sight and touch. The eruption continues for 3 weeks or as long as the fever lasts. The mortality is about 8 to 10 per cent. Quinine has no effect on this fever. The notes on this fever have kindly been given by Hospital Assistant Ganesh Prashād, who was twenty years in the district. I have seen no cases myself, but to my mind the clinical picture so closely resembles typhoid fever, that I would be chary of classing it otherwise without definite agglutination tests.

"The other fevers are few and unimportant. I saw one case of relapsing fever in a pilgrim returning from Purī. Occasionally when on tour I have come across cases of enormously enlarged spleens in subjects who are markedly anæmic and cachectic; and it is quite possible these were cases of the cachectic fever described by Major L. Rogers. No spleen punctures were made."

Among other common diseases may be mentioned dysentery and diarrhoea, respiratory diseases, skin diseases, rheumatic affections of a chronic type, and diseases of the eye. Dysentery and diarrhoea are unusually frequent and fatal, the death-rate in 1907 being 2·81 per mille. The prevalence of these and

other bowel complaints should probably be attributed to the impure source of drinking water-supply, for in this district the people almost invariably drink tank water, which in the hot weather months becomes polluted, turgid and impure. Respiratory diseases are also responsible for a greater mortality than in other districts of Bengal, the death-rate in the same year being 1·22 per mille. Epidemics of cholera were formerly common, breaking out nearly every hot season owing to the train of pilgrims on their march to and from the temple of Jagannāth at Puri. Since the pilgrim traffic has been diverted to the railway, such epidemics are neither so frequent nor so deadly. Spleen is common in the jungly districts, where the water is impregnated with decaying vegetable matter. Syphilis is prevalent, and occasionally very bad forms are met with, which are probably due to the lack of proper treatment. Infirmities, such as blindness, leprosy, deaf-mutism and insanity, are comparatively rare. It is reported that leprosy appears to be more common south of the Sumbalpur-Raipur road than north of it.

Village sanitation is regulated by the Central Provinces Village Sanitation Act and the *Mukaddam* Rules, which are a legacy of the administration of the Central Provinces. It may be explained that in the Central Provinces Land Revenue Act, 1881 (amended by Act XVI of 1889), it is provided that the *mukaddam* or headman of the village has, among his other duties, "subject to any rules issued by the Chief Commissioner, to keep his village in good sanitary condition." This enables the Government or its officers to cause action to be taken in any small village in respect of any flagrant violation of sanitary principles. It is the headman who is responsible, and who must take action under the law. There are, however, many villages which are too large for the sanitation to be left in the hands of the *mukaddam*, and yet too small to come under the Central Provinces Municipal Act of 1889, which, like the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884, provides for large towns. They require systematic administration, involving a little taxation; and at the same time the elaborate machinery of the Municipal Act is unsuitable. For such villages the Village Sanitation Act (XI of 1902) was passed.

VILLAGE  
SANITA-  
TION.

The principal provisions of this Act are that it may be extended to any insanitary village containing not less than 500 inhabited houses (section 2); that the administration of the Act shall be committed to a village *panchayat* consisting of the *mukaddam* and representatives of the village elected by its inhabitants (section 3); that for this purpose funds shall be placed at their

disposal (sections 4 and 5), which may include an assessment on houses and land, and a levy of license fees on weighmen or measurers of goods brought for sale, of tolls on carts, pack-animals and potters bringing such goods, of market dues, *i.e.*, rents from temporary dealers, and of fees on the voluntary registration of cattle sales. The breach of the provisions of the Act is punishable by fine [section 7 (3) and section 9], and prosecutions may be instituted on the complaint either of the Deputy Commissioner or of the *panchayat*, or of some persons authorized to act on behalf of either. The operation of the Act in the case of any village may be limited to simple conservancy, or it may be extended to include "the improvement of the water-supply or of the village roads, or any other work of public utility." Briefly, the Act authorizes the creation of a small fund to be expended on sanitation in important villages, which are not sufficiently large to be made municipal towns. The arrangements are in the hands of a small committee of the residents, and simple rules for the disposal of sewage, the protection of the water-supply, and the preservation of cleanliness in the village generally, are enforced. This Act is in force in Bargarh and Jharsagura.

The *Mukaddam* Rules, which have been introduced in Barpali and Padampur, provide for a house-tax and rate on rents, but do not provide for the appointment of a committee. Under these rules the headman is responsible for the enforcement of certain elementary sanitary precautions, and the villages under them are inspected by officers on tour to see that they are observed. It should be added that the *mukaddam* is responsible for the sanitation of every village, but has been empowered to maintain a special establishment only in the two places mentioned. The sanitary requirements are the same in either case, and both *mukaddams* and ryots may be punished for their neglect.

Vaccination is compulsory only in the municipal area of Sambalpur, but is carried on by itinerant paid vaccinators in the interior. Though regarded by certain sections of the community with some dislike, it cannot be said that there is any general antipathy to the operation. Speaking generally, there is no objection to the primary vaccination of children, but the people, as a rule, look upon revaccination with aversion. The number of persons successfully vaccinated in 1907-08 was 26,400, representing 42·37 per mille of the population, and it is noticeable that of these no less than 1,942 were cases of revaccination. In the same year protection was afforded to as many as 925 per thousand of

infants, and no other Bengal district except Rānchī had such a good record.

Inoculation for small-pox was formerly practised, but has now disappeared. How common it used to be may be gathered from the following account in a Report on the Medical Topography of the South-Western Political Districts by Mr. J. Shortt, Assistant Surgeon, 1855 :—"Small-pox devastates whole villages, and hence small-pox inoculation is practised, and is the chief source of contagion, from whence the disease propagates itself far and wide. It is practised by ticcadars, who make it their means of livelihood. The practice is compulsory, that a member of a family is bound to follow in the same occupation as his predecessors for the maintenance of himself and family. Vaccination is not known, nay, more correctly speaking, has never been heard of in these parts. From personal interview with ticcadars, they as well as the people, on its being explained to them, had no objection to vaccination being substituted for inoculation. The people dread the present practice, yet, the evil being a necessary one, they are obliged to resort to it."

Charitable dispensaries have been established at Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsagurā and Padampur in the Borāsāmbār zamīndāri. There is also a leper asylum at Sambalpur maintained by private subscriptions and from the rent of a bungalow left for the purpose by Mr. Goodridge. Particulars of the working of the charitable dispensaries may be gathered from the following table which gives the salient statistics for 1907 :--

Dispensary.	Beds.		Total number treated.	Daily average.		Receipts.	Expenditure.
	Males.	Females.		Out-patients.	In-patients.		
						Rs.	Rs.
Sambalpur ...	16	8	33,706	154	20	6,833	4,315
Bargarh ...	4	2	14,512	55	2	1,719	1,054
Jharsagurā ...	...	...	5,363	41	...	1,184	910
Padampur ...	3	3	4,625	17	1	947	947

## CHAPTER V.

## FORESTS.

**RESERVED FORESTS.** **General description.** THE reserved forests of Sambalpur extend over 396 square miles, and are situated on the Bārapahār hills in the north of the Bargarh subdivision and on the ranges in the east and south of the Sambalpur subdivision. There are two types of forest, one consisting of *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*) interspersed with bamboos and other trees, and the other being mixed forest of bamboos and inferior species. *Sāl* forest, which thrives best on well-drained slopes of sandy loam, occupies all the hills and valleys of the Sambalpur range and the principal valleys of the Bārapahār range, with an aggregate area of about 238 square miles. The mixed forest is situated on the dry rocky hills of the Bārapahār range, where *sāl* will not grow, and covers 155 square miles. For administrative purposes the forests are divided into 2 ranges and 43 blocks. Ten of these blocks are situated in the Bargarh subdivision, where eight of them form the Bārapahār range; and the Sambalpur subdivision contains 33 blocks, which, with the remaining two blocks in the Bargarh subdivision, make up the Sambalpur range. The area of the two ranges is 212 and 182 square miles respectively. The Bārapahār forest is composed of a large, compact group of blocks to the west of the Mahānadi river, while the Sambalpur range includes a number of detached blocks of various sizes, which for the most part occupy hilly, or more or less broken ground to the east of that river.

**History of conservancy.** Forest conservancy appears to have been neglected during the early years of British administration in this district. In 1866 the Settlement Commissioner raised the question of the advisability of Government setting aside and conserving waste lands to which neither private persons nor village communities could lay claim. The selection of such lands was finally carried out in the course of the settlement operations between 1872 and 1876, and is described by the Settlement

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The account of the reserved forests is mainly a reproduction of a note kindly contributed by Mr. A. L. McIntire, Conservator of Forests, Bengal.

Officer as follows:—"As the villages in the *khāṣa* (the term used for villages held direct from Government by village headmen) were being inspected preparatory to assessment, the opportunity was taken of examining hill, waste and forest-covered tracts. In doing so, the wants and requirements of the people in the neighbourhood were fully taken into consideration. The operation of excluding waste lands was necessarily confined to hill and jungle tracts, which had notoriously been in the actual possession of no individual or community, which had hitherto in fact been common property, to which any body that liked resorted, cut timber, wood, grass, bamboos, made *dahi* fields and *ramblās* (hill slopes sown with Indian corn, castor and cucumbers), and, in fact, helped themselves to anything they wanted, without let or hindrance from any one. In such tracts it was that the rights of the State were asserted. The selected tracts were demarcated separately from village areas, and were declared to be the property of Government." The forests were notified as reserved forests under the Forest Act in 1878, a revised notification being issued in 1897.

In selecting them many Government waste lands, mostly wooded, were excluded and allowed to form part of the *gaontīāhi* villages, and the large forests in the *zamīndāris*, the owners or occupants of which could claim the ownership of waste lands, were not affected. The principal objects of reservation appear to have been the preservation of the sources from which the inhabitants of the district derive a supply of forest produce, and the securing of the indirect advantages which are generally believed to result from forest protection, such as an increased and well-distributed rainfall, the safety of slopes, and the preservation of sources of water-supply.

Until 1887, when a Forest Officer was appointed, the reserves were managed by the revenue officials with the help of a very small staff of subordinates; and inhabitants of the district were allowed to cut and collect produce in them, and to graze their cattle as much as they liked, on payment of a fee of four annas a year on each plough or roof. The latter is known as a commutation fee, because the villagers are allowed to commute for their annual supply of fuel and timber for home consumption on payment of a fixed sum. The appointment of a Forest Officer led to the formation of the Sambalpur Forest Division and the introduction of the forest stamp system, which is a feature of forest management in the Central Provinces. Under this system respectable inhabitants of conveniently situated villages are appointed forest license-vendors. They supply applicants with

Commuta-  
tion and  
stamp  
system.



licenses to cut and remove such produce as the latter may require on payment at rates specified in an authorized schedule of prices; and they place on each license forest stamps, which they can purchase from the treasury, of the value of the produce covered by the license. Their remuneration consists of a commission (generally one anna in the rupee) on the amount spent by them on purchasing stamps from the treasury. This system, as it obliged villagers to pay for every thing they removed from the reserves, and led to the reservation of the more valuable kinds of trees, was a great improvement on the commutation system.

Manage-  
ment.

A further improvement was effected by attempting to protect a part of the forests from fire. But no attempt was made to introduce located fellings or to regulate grazing till 1893, when sanction was given to a working plan for the Bārapahār and neighbouring forests, which form the Bārapahār range. This working plan prescribed coppice fellings in small areas, and improvement fellings in some other areas, but made no arrangement for the management of the greater part of the range; and when it was sought to carry out its provisions, it was quickly discovered that the demand for poles and firewood was insufficient to justify them. Hence there have been various modifications of the plan, of which the only practical effect has been to restrict the cutting of green trees to areas sufficient to supply demands in the localities concerned and to permit of the subsequent closure to grazing of areas so cut over. Similar arrangements have also been made in parts of other forests, i.e., in the Sambalpur range, where they appeared to be justified by local demands; and in this latter range efforts were also made, between 1900 and 1905, to increase revenue by cutting into railway sleepers any large-sized *sāl* trees which could be found.

Since 1905 it has been sought to introduce a better regulation of fellings of all descriptions. But such efforts are greatly hindered by the fact that large numbers of the inhabitants of the district can still obtain all the forest produce they require from village lands or the zamindāri forests, or live at such distances from the reserves that they cannot readily make use of the latter. In fact, bamboos are still the only product of the reserves for which there can be said to be a general demand. It has also been sought to select for special management areas which, while they are unlikely to have to meet a large local demand, appear to be suitable for producing *sāl* timber for export, and to close such areas to grazing as far as possible. It is estimated that the total area now available for this kind of management is between 50

and 60 square miles. At the same time, the exclusion of goats and sheep from the reserves has been carried out; fire protection has been improved, the area under special protection being now 302 square miles (which will shortly be increased); and arrangements have been made to acquire a number of small villages enclosed in the Bārapahār forest, which have long been sources of danger to that forest.

The most important tree in the reserves is *sāl* or *rengāl* (*Shorea Forest robusta*), which is found in greater or less abundance in most parts of the Sambalpur range and in the lower parts of the Bārapahār forest. Other trees having a value for export are *piāsāl* or *bijā* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*), which is scattered over most of the slopes and is fairly abundant in parts of the Bārapahār forest; *sisū* (*Dalbergia Sissoo*), which has much the same distribution as *piāsāl*, though it is rarer than the latter; and *bhirā* (*Chloroxylon Sicutenia*), which is well represented on small areas scattered throughout the forests. Besides these, there are a number of inferior kinds of trees, which are used locally for house-building, for making agricultural implements, and for fuel, e.g., *garāri* (*Cleistanthus collinus*), *sāj* or *sāhāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*); *kendu* (*Diospyros Melanoxylon*), *senha* (*Lagerstræmia parviflora*), and many others. Bamboos (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) also abound on nearly all the slopes and ridges; and teak is found in one small forest near Sambalpur.

*Sāl* is, as a rule, only represented by poles and small trees up to 3 or 4 feet in girth; and so far as the greater part of the area is concerned, it appears doubtful whether fine trees yielding timber suitable for export will ever be grown. But in the areas, aggregating 50 to 60 square miles, which are under selection in the Sambalpur range for special management, conditions appear to be more hopeful. Such areas generally contain, besides considerable numbers of promising young trees, up to 3 feet or rather more in girth, a sprinkling of large, often well-grown, *sāl* trees. The almost universal rottenness of these large trees may reasonably be attributed to past burning and the system of shifting cultivation known as *jhūm*, and to the persistent cutting out of the soundest trees before the forests were protected. Of other kinds of trees all that it is necessary to note is that, though fair-sized specimens of all species are to be found here and there, they are usually represented by miniature or ill-formed trees or poles. Generally, the incompleteness of the crop, the scarcity of large, well-grown trees, and the relative abundance of ill-formed trees of small or moderate size, afford abundant evidence of the abuses to which the forests have till quite recently been exposed.

It is, however, clear that, though in many places grazing retards their improvement, the forests are slowly recovering. Seedlings of most kinds of trees, especially of *sāl* in the places where that tree is largely represented, are becoming numerous, and it is probable that in about 20 years nearly all parts of the forests, excepting relatively small areas where the soil is very poor indeed, and larger areas where bamboos have become very dense, will be well stocked with young trees of various kinds. As the demands of villagers increase—and they are almost certain to increase owing to the continued exhaustion of outside sources of supply and increased wants—it will be comparatively easy to regulate fellings, so as to meet their requirements and provide for the improvement of the forests. And though it will take long, probably 40 to 50 years, to produce any considerable quantity of large timber for export, a slow but steady increase in exports of *sāl*, *bijā*, *sisū*, and possibly also *blurā*, may be expected.

#### Revenue.

In the past most of the revenue has been derived from sales of produce, especially bamboos, at low prices, under the forest stamp system, to residents of the district, though the sleeper works already referred to gave some assistance. In the 10 years ending in 1904-05, the average revenue, expenditure and surplus of the Sambalpur Division were Rs. 28,979, Rs. 24,809 and Rs. 4,170 respectively. In the subsequent two years sleeper-cutting was stopped, but the loss of revenue caused in this way was more than made good by increased local sales under the stamp system and by sales of the produce of moderate improvement fellings in the more promising *sāl* areas of the Sambalpur range. The average revenue, expenditure and surplus for these two years have been Rs. 34,542, Rs. 26,622 and Rs. 7,902 respectively. There is every reason to anticipate a gradual increase in the revenue and surplus, and the latter is almost certain to attain a respectable figure in the course of the next 40 to 50 years. But forest management in the Sambalpur district is mainly justified by the consideration that without it all forests would eventually be destroyed; and even if their destruction resulted in no other disadvantages, the exhaustion of local supplies of forest produce would be a very serious blow to the prosperity of the district.

#### ZAMINDARI FORESTS.

At the first settlement of the district it appears to have been the intention of Government, in dealing with zamindari forests, to allot for the use of the estate a sufficient area of forest land, and to exclude the remainder as Government forest. Subsequently, however, the intention of forming separate State reserves from the zamindari forests was abandoned, and it was decided that the whole forest area was to be left to the zamindār,

but that in order to mark the right of the State to share in the produce of the forests, and to guard against the infringement of that right, the forests were to be separately assessed, and to be settled for periods of three years only. These orders were, however, only so far carried out in Sambalpur as to assess a forest *takoli* separately from the land revenue *takoli*. No attempt was made to demarcate the forests, nor were the *takolis* made liable to triennial revision.

At the next settlement (1885-89) it was determined to give more complete effect to this policy, and orders were issued laying down that "all extensive tracts of jungle included in a zamindāri should be declared to form a separate forest *mahāl*. For this purpose it is not necessary that the limits of such tracts should be precisely defined, and, in zamindāris which have not been surveyed, it will suffice if the position and extent of each forest tract be described by the assessing officer as clearly as may be with reference to the villages which adjoin it and any prominent natural features. A brief description of the character and capabilities of each forest tract should also be recorded. An estimate should then be framed of the income derived by the zamindār from the forest *mahāl* of his estate, and a *takoli* be assessed on the basis of this estimate, having reference of course to the amount of the forest *takoli* paid at present. Speaking generally, the share of the forest income taken as *takoli* should be from 40 to 60 per cent., but the Chief Commissioner would be prepared to sanction considerable deviations from this." The engagement for the payment of forest *takoli* was to contain a stipulation binding the zamindār to manage in accordance with the orders of Government. Subsequently, the zamindāri forest *mahāls*, as formed by the Settlement Officer, were formally declared to be forest *mahāls* within the meaning of section 46 of the Central Provinces Land Revenue Act, and rules of management were issued under section 124A of that Act.

In accordance with the above orders, the amount of the forest income of the zamindāris was roughly ascertained during the settlement of 1885-89, and a small assessment was fixed on it independently of the land assessment. It was apparently intended to revise triennially the assessment on a source of income which promised rapid development; but that policy was not carried out, the *takoli* fixed in 1885-89 remaining unaltered till the recent settlement. The procedure now followed is to ascertain as closely as possible the average gross income of the forests, to deduct from this the cost of the forest establishment maintained, to treat the remaining net income as assets, and to fix on it a proprietary

*kāmil-jamā*, i.e., the full assessment which a zamindār would pay if he had no feudal status but held as an ordinary proprietor.

The area of the zamindāri forests is 375 square miles, but of the sixteen zamindāris in the district only nine possess forests which yield an annual income, viz., Borāsāmbār, Ghēs, Kolābirā, Kodābāga, Lairā, Loisingh, Machidā, Rājpur and Rāmpur. They contain practically the same species of trees as the Government reserved forests. The value of the zamindāri forests, especially in the Borāsāmbār estate, is considerable; but until communications are improved, no large export of timber from that estate is possible. Other estates, however, such as Kolābirā, Rājpur and Rāmpur are situated along or close to the railway. Those in the Sambalpur subdivision are at present of considerable use not only to cultivators in the zamindāris, but also to those residing in *khālsa* villages in the neighbourhood, who usually find it more convenient to deal with the zamindārs than with the Government Forest Department.

#### VILLAGE FORESTS.

The village forests comprised in the *khālsa* area outside the reserves, which are either *khālsa giontiāhi* or *mālguzāri*, are of much less value. Throughout the *khālsa* area in the Bargarh plain all valuable forest has long been cleared. Much of this area is now cultivated; and though there are extensive tracts of scrub-jungle in the immediate neighbourhood of the reserves, all good timber has been cut out, and no replanting is ever done. These tracts are not culturable, and it is a misfortune that their timber should not have been conserved. The direct consequence is that villages in the most populous and closely cultivated part of the district have now no timber, bamboos, or even light fencing material near them, and cultivators have to cart what they need at considerable expense from distant Government reserves. In the Sambalpur subdivision conditions are not so bad; but the village forests here also are being rapidly cut out. In this latter tract the only *mālguzāri* forest of any extent or value now existing is that of the Tāmpargarh estate.

#### FUEL AND FODDER RESERVES.

At the settlement of 1885-89, 16 fuel and fodder reserves, with an area of 11,000 acres, were set aside, but no arrangement was made to regulate the use of their produce. Many orders were passed, but nothing was done to enforce them. The area reserved, moreover, consisted chiefly of bare boulders incapable of bearing either timber or forage; and what growth there was has been cut out exactly as in the village forests.

#### SYSTEM OF MANAGE- MENT.

It is reported that the methods of upkeep both in fuel and fodder reserves and in village forests are not all that could be desired. Nominally, these areas are Government property (except

in the case of the few *mālyugāri* estates of the district), and any overcutting or bad management on the part of the headmen of villages can be met by the Deputy Commissioner taking the forests under direct management. But this provision is not a practical one where there are a number of small scattered forests, and no special staff is maintained; for the Land Records staff is not strong enough to manage adequately village forests in addition to its present work.

The steps taken at the settlement recently concluded in order to prevent the misuse of these forests are described as follows by the Settlement Officer:—"The ill-effects of deforestation in the Bargarh plain pointed to the necessity for checking very carefully the boundaries of the village forests. In very many cases these were found to have been encroached upon for cultivation without competent permission. It is unfortunate that the wording of the detailed rules framed under section 124A of the Central Provinces Land Revenue Act has hitherto prevented their application to the villages and forests of Sambalpur, which are held by *gaontīās*, not as proprietors but as trustees. At this revision the general rule of the trust has been clearly restated. It points out that the produce of the forest of a *gaontīāhi* village cannot be exported, but must be used only for domestic and agricultural needs within the village itself. It has been proposed by several *gaontīās* living in one village to bring timber for domestic use from the forest of another village under their management. Brāhman *gaontīās* living in Sambalpur town wish to export wood from their villages to their houses. But as the trust is now frequently abused by the illegal sale of timber, the extension of the rule has not been considered advisable."

The following account of the general conditions obtaining is quoted from Mr. Dewar's Settlement Report:—"The district is still well wooded, but of late years cultivation has greatly extended, and in the more level tracts there are now no patches of timber-forest among the villages. Over the whole of the *knālsa* area outside the Government reserves there are about 124 square miles of "big-tree-jungle" and 333 square miles of scrub. But the latter area is all but useless, and the former is confined to parts of the eastern *tahsil*. At last settlement certain fuel and fodder reserves were excised from villages in the more open tracts. But their area was very small, their surface consisted almost entirely of bare rock, and they now grow no timber and but little fodder. The needs of the cultivator are met almost entirely from the Government reserves, which cover 396 square miles, and from the *zamīndāri* forests which, excluding those

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of Phuljhar, cover 375 square miles. East of the Mahānadi the villages deal chiefly with the zamīndārī forests or with those of neighbouring States, because the prices exacted are usually lower than those of Government, and the conditions of sale are much more free and elastic, and give less scope to the delays and exactions of underlings. In the Bargarh plain all except the western villages get their supplies from the Government reserve in the Bāraphār range.

“The chief requirement is the bamboo, for the wattling of house-walls and roofs, for screens, baskets and mats, and for the fencing of vegetable gardens and cane-fields. It is abundant in all forests. So too is the class of small second-rate timber, such as the *karlu*, *dhāora*, and *sunha*, which are used for house-timber and carts. The *sāj* is also plentiful, and the *kusum*, which is used for ploughs, cane-mills, and other implements of hard wood. There is at present no large supply of big timber for export. The Government forests consist largely of steep and rocky hills, and have not been long under careful conservation. Most of the zamīndārs with estates near the railway have in the past years acted on the principle that “timber is an excrescence of the earth provided by God for the payment of debts.” Their forests are now thin. There is no teak, the most valuable timber trees being the *sāl* or *rengāl* and the *bijā*. Of these there is a good stock of saplings in the forests east of the Mahānadi, but it will be some years before their growth will permit of sleeper-cutting on a large scale. The big estate of Borāsāmbār has fair timber forests, which have of late been opened up, but their distance from a railway prevents full exploitation. Of miscellaneous forest produce, such as lac and myrobalans, there is but little export.”